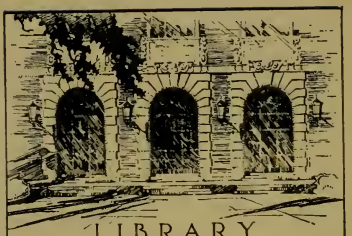

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THE CARBONARO.

A

PIEDMONTESE TALE.

BY

THE DUKE DE LEVIS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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PREFACE.

SOME seven years ago a strange adventure that took place in the canton of Evreuse, a little town about three leagues from Versailles, excited very general curiosity, and was noticed in the whole of the journals of the day. The affair to which we allude was the delivery of a female under circumstances of a very mysterious and tragical character; so much so, that, at the time, they formed the subject of every conversation. Of a couple of twins, one was said to have been murdered, without any plausible motive for the atrocity ever being attributed to the unknown perpetrator. Of the fact there could be no doubt: the midwife who attended

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the unhappy mother made her declaration in a court of justice, and the court ordered an investigation; but whether it was wrong directed, or gone about in an improper way, or whether Fortune, as she sometimes does, favoured the criminals, certain it is that no one was arrested; and thus a veil, which seemed impenetrable, was cast over the crime.

But there is no secret that the lapse of time reveals not; and, thanks to a very singular concurrence of circumstances, we have now come to a perfect knowledge of the whole mystery, together with all its extraordinary details. They are interesting in more than one point of view. In the first place, the energetic and impassioned character of the persons who played the principal parts gives to these events a peculiarity which differs essentially from any thing that we are accustomed to see in our cold clime, where the regulated mannerism of society, and its monotony of habitudes, afford but a very limited play either for good or for bad qualities. And from these circumstances it also results, that the historian who paints even with ordinary fidelity a picture of nature thus ani-

mated, and of scenes so lively and so striking, is almost certain of attracting the attention of the public, ever greedy of strong sensations. Our only motive, however, in giving publicity to the following recital of adventures is, that by such means we hope to make our countrymen better acquainted with an epoch which has been too slightly dwelt upon, although it was the most remarkable in every respect that succeeded the restoration. The year 1821 was a critical, we might say an alarming, period. Europe, but recently relieved from the most violent shocks, appeared as if ready to enter on a fresh career of revolution; Spain was in a state of insurrection, and threatened to snatch from her king the enjoyment of those rights for whose integrity she had courageously contended when he was in captivity; the CARBONARO was dominant in Naples and at Turin, where his affiliated brethren swarmed; and in the north, in Prussia, in Poland, and even in Russia, secret societies, whose objects were no longer limited to the seduction of a few university pupils, were zealously employed in an endeavour to shake the honesty of the guards of monarchy.

England, whose power and whose immense mass of wealth is every year augmenting, was not at that moment in a more peaceful condition than her neighbours, when the starving millions of her artisans were goaded to fury by the theories of the radicals. Even the ices of the north did not operate as an absolute check on the general effervescence. In the very centre of Scandinavia an ultra-liberal diet, we allude to the Storthing of Norway, made an attempt to abolish hereditary aristocracy, which was defended, strange to tell, by a king sprung from the lowest ranks of the people.

In the east, again, the Hetairists of the principalities, the Greeks of Attica and of the Morea, had by a bold and magnanimous effort shaken off the yoke which weighed on their shoulders; although there the fanatical mussulman opposed by his predestinative doggedness, which renders him inaccessible to the impressions of fear, to the enthusiasm inspired by the love of freedom, and the exaltation of mind which glorious recollections impart, an energy of resistance that, after seven years of carnage and of devastation on both sides, has left the issue of that bloody struggle still dubious.

In the meanwhile, and this is not the least singularity of so singular a period, he whom Europe had with difficulty contained, was expiating by long and painful suffering the faults of policy and crimes of ambition, of which he had been guilty, in a lonely and insignificant islet, in the midst of scenes far distant from those he had disturbed and distinguished. Struck down, yet still at the head of a formidable party, he sunk under an enemy whom victors and vanquished equally respect; and the dying throes of this modern Titan shook the civilised world to its base.

But France is the spot to which our cares principally extend. Is it possible to forget the condition of that country at the period in question—when parties were drawn up for the fight, and merely waited the signal to mingle in deadly strife; when royal authority tottered on its seat; when its dependants were more occupied with the thoughts of what *had been* than of what *was* owing to it; when the royalists were disunited, and their enemies striving each who should rival his fellow in audacity; when the ministry was weak; the king dying; the army rather an object of fear than of trust? If

the public peace was not actually attacked, at least the public security, that grand tie which connects the various parts of society, no longer existed. In a word, the general uneasiness that agitated all classes of the community could be fairly likened to nothing but that terrible anxiety that is felt by the natives of a country subject to volcanic eruptions when, after some dreadful convulsion of nature, followed by a few days of calm, they again perceive the earth heaving, and the mountains bellowing, and when no one can possibly tell whether these are the last effects of a fire that is dying out, or the terrible symptoms of a new conflagration.

The fatal presages were not indeed realised. The divinity which watches over our country dissipated with his powerful breath the storm that seemed accumulating above our heads; and yet, the more to mock the pride of human foresight, he educed a calm out of the midst of those tempests, and converted an element of discord into a means of safety. The war in the Peninsula, which the enemies of the Bourbons were the first to invoke, because they imagined that simple contact would mingle in one mass the revolutionary armies of the

two countries, dispersed the army of Spain, and made royalism the prevailing feature of the army of France.

These memorable events are recorded in our chronicles; but the events that led to them lie hidden in darkness, and will probably remain so for many a year. Indeed, the mass of memoirs and reminiscences, that desire of gain every day produces, so far from enlightening facts, do but shroud the truth in yet thicker darkness, while the lies and scandal they contain only serve to grieve morality and to make malignity smile. The spirit of party appears through all the envelopes and disguises that they assume; and their wish to circulate this or that opinion to excuse this or that personal fault, is every where so obvious, that it inspires a just distrust of all their statements, and makes those doubtful which are best verified.

The lack of impartiality in ocular witnesses, above all during times of trouble which strongly excite the passions, is an old malady in human nature. It has been with a view to provide against it that writers gifted with talents for observation as well as the power of enchaining attention, have not feared to

summon fiction to the assistance of virtue; and in bestowing on their descriptions a dramatic form, their readers not unfrequently find in the imaginary personages that they put forward on the stage a more strict resemblance to the realities of life than in the best drawn pictures of the historian. In order to appreciate the extent of the success thus attained, the mere announcement of which may appear paradoxical, we must remember previous to Corneille how few knew any thing of the heights to which Roman greatness could soar; and in the present day, has it not been said, and with reason, that there is more truth in one of the novels of Scott than in many histories?

When we reflect maturely on these facts, we cannot avoid coming to the conclusion, that the form of historic composition is almost a matter of indifference, and that the only thing of real importance is its sincerity. By sincerity, we of course mean the desire of making truth triumph, to the exclusion of all notions that are inexact, whether of things or persons; in a word, a firm resolution to give to every one what is fairly due, and no more. But in order to attain this highly

honourable end mere rectitude of intention is not sufficient, we must scrupulously watch against all those predilections which the prejudices of birth, the rank we occupy in society, and especially our community of interest with the parties described, are apt to inspire us even without our being conscious of it.

It is this virtue of sincerity, a negative one it may be said, but not the less rare on that account, for which, in defect of all others, we claim credit in the pages that we are about to submit to the public, and which form the first part of a history that we may at a future period complete.

There are certain documents still wanting to complete our work. We await their arrival from Greece: in which country, at Egina, after valiantly serving in the cause of liberty, the unfortunate young man who plays the principal character in the following history very lately terminated his chequered and unfortunate career.

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THE CARBONARO.

CHAPTER I.

THE midnight bell had tolled, the lights were extinguished, and the little town of Chevreuse was wrapped in sleep, when a domestic, whose accent spoke him a foreigner, was heard to knock repeatedly at the door of Dame Bontemps, the midwife, whose aid he had come to solicit for a female that was then in labour, about two leagues from the village. Old Bontemps, the husband of the *accoucheuse*,

pushed up the window of the second floor where he lodged—

"The night is chilly and dark," said he; "my dame has a cold; go to the doctor, at the corner of the square opposite the church."

"He is not at home," answered the voice; "and, besides, it is Dame Bontemps in whom alone we repose confidence. Bid her get up: her labour will be amply rewarded. If she require twenty francs in advance, I have orders to give them to her."

"I shall open the door immediately," said old Bontemps. Whilst the messenger was being admitted, and was taking some hasty refreshment, after depositing a napoleon on the chimney-piece of the parlour, the good dame dressed herself for a journey; and, anticipating a troublesome labour, she took down the green bag that held her professional implements, and

wrapping herself up in her good man's cloak, set out with her guide.

When they had gone on for a hundred yards, they found at the turn of a little street a covered car, the horse of which was tied to the bars of a window.

" Get in," said the man, " it is my master's market-cart, which he sent, lest you should be fatigued."

Dame Bontemps placed herself in the seat of the car accordingly. When they were about a musket-shot away from the town, the messenger drew hastily a handkerchief from his pocket, and addressing Dame Bontemps, said roughly,—" I have orders to blindfold you: do not attempt to resist; it is quite useless."

Dame Bontemps lacked neither courage nor wit, but she was alone; it was night, and she

was at the will of a powerful man. To yield was, therefore, a matter of necessity, and she submitted. Such extraordinary precautions, she thought, betokened nothing good, but she affected to treat them lightly.

"If you will have a game of blindman's-buff," said she, "good: but it is a useless precaution, for we sort of folks tell no tales; and, besides, 'tis so dark, that one can hardly see with their eyes open."

"It matters not," said the guide, binding the handkerchief firmly round her head, "it is my orders." After a minute or two of silence, he added,—"You have no cause for alarm, Dame Bontemps, my master is generous, and you will be well paid; but he is a devil of a fellow, and will be obeyed, let him order what he will. His anger is terrible, and no one ever withstood it with impunity."

During this conversation, which was but little calculated to give her confidence, the good dame perceived, by the jolting of the car, that they had quitted the high way to Versailles, and betaken them to some cross-road; and she was aware, from the rubbing of the branches on the top of the vehicle, that they were traversing a wood. At length they stopped; and the barking of a couple of dogs told that they were close to some country-seat, or farm-house. The driver alighted, pushed up the great gate which he had left ajar when he set out, and drove forward the car into a large yard. He then assisted Dame Bontemps to alight from the car, but without allowing the *bandeau* to be removed from her eyes, until she was fairly in the inside of the building. The room into which she was thus introduced was a sort of barn, with an arched roof, one half of it filled

with wheat in the sheaf. At the end of the empty portion, and behind a garden mat, stood a stump-bed—a couch for misery to stretch itself on—on which lay a young female, whose long dishevelled tresses trailed on the floor, and who was so worn out and exhausted with distress of every kind, that she had no longer strength to complain, but only spoke her anguish in low groans. A few rude seats, a table of walnut-tree very much the worse for wear, a sorry pallet that leaned against one of the pillars which supported the gothic roof, composed the whole furniture of a place that up to that time no human being had ever inhabited. The flickering light of a lamp, placed on a pedestal from which the statue had fallen, dimly lighted up the scene of desolation. Near the bed, upon a low stool, a man was seated, whose features were half concealed by the broad brim of a

hat that was pulled over his eyes, and whose stature and garments were hidden by the folds of a Spanish cloak, in which he was enveloped. When the midwife entered, he arose and said, with a severe tone, " You have been long in coming; if you had arrived sooner, you might perhaps have saved the life of this infant that has just come into the world, and which is now dead." While speaking thus, he showed her a new-born babe, that lay stretched out at his feet on a heap of linen.

Dame Bontemps approached, in order to consider it more narrowly; and stooping down, " It gives no signs of life," said she, " yet we may try—"

" I tell you," interrupted the unknown, " that it is dead."

There was in the tones of the man, in his looks, and in the gesture with which his words

were accompanied, something imperious and sinistrous, that made Dame Bontemps shiver with terror.

"In good truth," answered she hastily and fearfully—an answer which she afterwards regretted—"it gives no signs of life."

"You hear, madam," said the unknown, addressing the unhappy mother, "the midwife declares that the child is dead." He immediately stooped down, wrapped up the infant in a cloth, and, after saying a few words in a strange tongue, handed the body to the servant, and then walked out along with him.

Dame Bontemps, now left alone with the travailing woman, approached the bed, in order to render her such services as her case required. She had no sooner done so, than she was aware of a second infant that was about to be brought forth; and scarcely was it born, when the effort

of nature that accompanied its birth restored the use of her senses to the mother, of which she had to that moment remained apparently deprived. She opened her eyes, and, meeting the compassionate glance of the midwife, with a tone of despair addressed her—

"For Heaven's sake, take pity on this unhappy infant! save this one at least, I conjure you, if Heaven permit it; the good deed will not go unrewarded."

Dame Bontemps, who was as kind as she was courageous, promised to do all that was in her power, but, at the first blush, no expedient presented itself to her mind. So pressing a necessity, however, soon set her wits to work; and on a sudden, and as if by inspiration, she bethought her of the bag that contained her instruments. She immediately drew them out, and concealed them at the end of the barn

between two sheaves of corn: she then took the child from its mother, who gave it to her with her blessing. "Dear little one," said she, "may that God, in whom I trust, preserve to thee the life which he has given!" Dame Bontemps speedily wrapped up her charge in her apron, and stowed it in the best way she could in the bag, in which she was careful to leave an opening for its breathing.

"Trust to me," said she, in a tone which gave consolation to the heart of its mother; "I will no more abandon it, than if it were my own son; but if it cry, we are undone!"

In a short time the dreaded moment arrived; the scowling-looking stranger returned. Collecting all the courage she could, Dame Bontemps, with an air of calmness, said—

"My presence here is no longer necessary; the women of the house can render the lady

any ordinary services, and there has been no accident in the case. For my part, I am impatiently expected at Chevreuse: will you reconduct me thither?"

"That is but just. Take these forty francs, and set out; don't attempt to pierce into my secret; 'tis as much as your head is worth."

The midwife took the money, thanked the giver, and went a step or two towards the door, then hastily returned to take her bag, which she feigned to have forgotten, squeezed affectionately the hand of her patient, under the pretence of feeling her pulse, and bidding her be of good cheer, departed. The car was ready to receive her; and scarcely had she taken her place, when the servant again tied the handkerchief round her head; a precaution that was indeed more excusable than before, as the day was now about to break. When

they set out, Dame Bontemps thought she could perceive that, in quitting the house, they did not take the same road that they had in coming to it; and she was strengthened in this opinion from feeling, by the motion of the car, that they were descending a steep hill, which must have retarded the pace of the horse, if they had had to climb it, in their previous drive. She could perceive also, from the rustling of the dry leaves in the wind, that they were travelling in a wood. The desire of discovering some clue to the case of the unhappy woman, whom she had just left in so lamentable a condition, forcibly directed her attention to these particulars; and she was endeavouring to imprint on her memory whatever might assist her in her ulterior researches, when a report of a gun fired at a short distance made her start in alarm.

" 'Tis robbers," said she in a subdued voice, and pressing close to her driver.

" It is some poachers rather," replied he; " but we are now at our journey's end; get down, and, on your life, stir not from this spot for a quarter of an hour hence." So saying, he placed her at the foot of an oak; and having done so, turned his horse's head, and drove rapidly off.

The first care of the midwife was to open the bag, in which she found with joy the infant living and breathing, but extremely weak. While she was warming it in her bosom, a hound pushed through the brushwood, and halting some ten paces from her, began to bark: the noise speedily brought forward its master, who, imagining that he had lighted on a poacher, exclaimed, " Give up your arms, you thief, or I'll blow your brains out!"

" Don't fire!" cried the frightened dame in her turn, " I am a woman."

" Ah, that alters the case," said the game-keeper with a softened voice; " but what are you doing here at this untimely hour?—cutting wood, I suppose, or plundering the warren. The duke does not do enough for the poor, mayhap, they must rob him too! These rascally peasants, 'tis always their way, the more you favour 'em —"

" You are wrong now, Lafrance," said Dame Bontemps, who, from his voice, recognised in the man a keeper whose wife she had delivered, at Chevreuse, the preceding year: " I have lost my way; you must assist me in finding it again. Are we far from the town?"

" Ah! what! it is you, Dame Bontemps! You are a good half league from home; but tell us by what mishap are you here?"

"I shall tell you that some other day. I have a baby here that requires succour. Guide me out of the wood."

"Most cheerfully: you midwife folks, you are always in a mystery; but come, lean on my arm, you appear fatigued." In a short time they reached the road from Dampierre to Chevreuse, that runs along the river Yvette: the morning was now getting light, and they met some country people going to market. Them Dame Bontemps joined; and the keeper, perceiving that she had no more need of him, quitted her, in order to finish his rounds.

CHAPTER II.

It was about six o'clock in the morning when Dame Bontemps got back to Chevreuse. Her husband, who perceived that she was overcome with fatigue, and extremely agitated, was anxious to learn the cause of her uneasiness, but she was not in a condition to satisfy him : after a few minutes' rest, however, she recovered, and narrated to him, in all their details, the events of the night.

Bontemps was one of those characters which

are but too rife in the world. His natural disposition was not bad ; and his first thoughts generally inclined him to the side of generosity: but his cupidity never failed to gain the mastery; and, when his interest and his benevolence were unhappily opposed to each other, the struggle was seldom a long one. On the occasion in question, he pitied very sincerely the fate of the unfortunate mother and outcast child; but, in a short time, the dread of the expense cooled these kindly sentiments ; and he asked, with an air of embarrassment, what Dame Bontemps meant to do with the latter.

"I am determined to take care of it, as if it were my own :—have I not promised as much?"

"But did you consider well the difficulties that this may bring us into? Who is to pay for the nurse? Not a parcel of unknown persons, that you will never see in your days again.

You have left your instruments behind, too; and they are worth almost as much as all the money you have got. Come, if you will follow my advice, send the child to the Foundling. You have risked your life to save his; is not that enough? As to the circumstances attending his birth, the most prudent way is to say nothing about them."

"I will not follow your advice," replied the midwife in a firm tone. "In the first place, humanity cries out against it. Ought I not to try, in conscience, to rescue this unhappy woman from the hands of her oppressor? And how can I do that if I do not make known to the officers of justice what I have seen? Besides, I should compromise my own safety. Suppose me, for a moment, to be silly enough to hold my tongue; is it not obvious that, were it discovered that I had a knowledge of this

crime (and nothing can be concealed for ever), it would be a just ground of reproach against me? Yes, the very least that could happen, in that case, would be the loss of my certificate." This last consideration affected Bontemps more sensibly than the moral part of his wife's argument. He was a lazy subject, and carried on, after a very indifferent fashion, a small trade, whose profits were next to nothing. It was his wife, by her activity and intelligence and practice, which extended over the whole of the district, that furnished means for the support of their household. Alarmed, therefore, at the bare idea of her business being interdicted, he not only no longer persisted in his first advice, but he even proposed to go along with her to the judge's house, for the purpose of lodging an information.

M. Dupuy, the district magistrate of Che-

vreuse, owed his place to the influence of the deceased Duke of Luynes, whose attorney he had been at the time when lords of the manor enjoyed, on their own lands, the privilege of judging both in great and small causes. Honest, and even disinterested, he was yet accused of harshness in his manners and severity in his judgments. Distrustful and suspicious from his natural disposition, the crimes of the Revolution, of which he had narrowly escaped being the victim, had soured his temper. In his eyes all men were rogues; and, when a crime was committed in his district, he hunted out the authors of it with an activity in which passion too largely mingled. In a word, if it must be said, he felt a secret pleasure in punishing culprits; a race which, according to him, with a very few exceptions, filled the whole of the world. It was easy to perceive that it was not

without repugnance he submitted to the new institutions; that he sincerely regretted the ancient regime, and more especially the judiciary part of it. He would cheerfully uncover, while but mentioning the parliament of Paris; but as for juries, they were his abhorrence. To finish his picture, his talents were small, and his knowledge limited.

M. Dupuy listened to the recital of Dame Bontemps with the most lively attention. "This is a terrible business," said he: "first, murder presumptive of the infant, and that is not the whole of it; there is every reason to believe that the female had been run away with; and thence came rape, murder, God knows what! One thing is evident, the wretch has accomplices; there is the servant that drove the car—but what say I? the whole house must be

a rendezvous of robbers. We must seize every soul of them. Ho ! call the lieutenant of the police; his whole party will not be too many for our purpose."

"But," said Dame Bontemps, "how are we to go about finding them out?"

The magistrate, hurried on by the zeal with which he entered on all judicial investigations, had not yet asked himself this very simple question; and it appeared to pose him. After a moment's hesitation, however, he answered, "Dame, you shall be our guide."

"I! you forget, M. Dupuy, that my eyes were blinded all the time of the ride. I was not allowed to look up, until I got to the wood of Dampierre, where I met with the keeper of the château."

"No matter! Those who bring a charge

must furnish the means of prosecuting it to conviction; if they do not, I must tell you they will be liable to suspicion themselves."

"My duty was to tell all I knew, and I have fulfilled it; it is the business of the police to make the necessary search; with that I have no concern."

"You are a party to the process, and I shall keep you to it."

"All that I can do is to identify the criminals when they are confronted with me; and assuredly I shall do so, without allowing myself to be brow-beaten."

At this point the arrival of the lieutenant of police suspended the dispute, which was beginning to be a warm one. M. de Sainville was a retired officer of the army of Condé, a man of pure honour, of extreme delicacy, and of unquestioned bravery. To these qualities he

joined an intellect remarkable at once for subtlety and solidity. Ever on horseback, and as well acquainted with the surface of the country as an habitual hunter (hunting had indeed been the passion of his youth), he was the protector of the weak, and the terror of the robber. M. Dupuy prized his talents and revered his probity; and, in every matter of difficulty, he sought his counsel, and relied upon it.

As soon as the lieutenant appeared, "You are come quite opportunely, M. de Sainville," said he to him, "to prevail on Dame Bontemps to conduct us to a spot where she witnessed the perpetration of some most criminal acts. They are no less delicts than murder and ravishment that we are discussing."

"I would with all my heart," interrupted the midwife briskly, "if it were in my power;

but how can I know any thing of roads over which I travelled blindfold?"

The lieutenant observed, that this difficulty, though great, was not insurmountable, and, that by collecting all the marks, and attending to the different circumstances, and, lastly, by calculating the time spent in the journey, they might succeed, if not in supplying that information which Dame Bontemps could not give, at least in greatly facilitating the measures that justice might require.

"Well, well, then," cried the judge, "put the questions yourself: as for me, I have been too long from school."

Sainville at first declined the task, but at last he yielded. The questions and answers, of which a note was taken, were as follow:

"At what hour did you set out from Chevreuse?"

"It might be half-past twelve, perhaps a little more."

"How did you leave the town?"

"By the gate that leads to Versailles."

"Did the car that conveyed you go at a quick pace?"

"The horse trotted while on the high-road, but, when he came to the cross-road, he walked."

"How long were you on the high-road?"

"About half an hour."

"To which hand did you turn when you quitted it?"

"I think I am certain that we turned to the left."

"At what o'clock did you arrive at the farm?"

"That I cannot possibly tell."

"You recollect, at least, how long you remained there?"

"Nearly an hour—perhaps a little less."

"And how long were you in returning?"

"I think it must have been about three quarters of an hour from the time I left the house, until I fell in with the keeper. I came back with him but slowly, because I was fatigued. We were a good hour on the road."

"And you got home when?"

"At half-past five o'clock."

"You were absent then altogether five hours, during one of which you rested. There remain two to go and two to come back; now you went better than half of the way at a walking pace, or on foot, and, unquestionably, you did not go straight forward; hence I conclude that the place to which you were conveyed was not more than two leagues distant in a straight line. Now tell me, do you think you passed through any villages in your route?"

"I do not believe I did; for the dogs would have barked as they did at the farm."

"Can you describe to us the building into which you were received?"

"I have already told M. Dupuy that it was a barn; but there was this peculiarity in it, that one could not see the tiles; the roof was arched in the old fashion, like the choir of our church of Chevreuse."

The officer of police was about to continue his interrogation, when the magistrate, rising up suddenly, drew him aside into an adjoining room, telling Dame Bontemps, drily, to wait the while. When he was alone with the lieutenant, he began to communicate his suspicions.

"Don't you perceive," said he, "that this midnight journey, this bandage over her eyes, and all the rest of the romantic circumstances, are mere fables, invented for the purpose of

putting justice on a false scent? I could bet that this mysterious childbirth took place in the town of Chevreuse; and that it is from a hope of screening the criminals, who are perhaps her acquaintances, or who have paid her highly, that this midwife gives us indications that will lead to no discovery. But I won't allow a magistrate like myself to be sported with in such a fashion. I am determined to send her to the king's *procureur*, who will, unquestionably, imprison her until she tell the truth, and until the whole business be cleared up."

Sainville replied, that he did not agree in opinion with the magistrate, and that the responses of Dame Bontemps appeared to him stamped with the impression of truth. "Besides," he added, "she is a respectable woman, and generally esteemed. I shall not say that, in order to cover the failing of an imprudent

girl, she might not stretch a point; but to fabricate crimes such as these, or to turn aside justice from the guilty, I cannot believe her capable of that. I know some particulars in her character that repel such an imputation."

"All these may be mere hypocrisy; and one thing is certain—the description of the barn, where she lays the scene of this adventure, has the elements of falsehood in it. The gothic vault can only apply to some old church. Now it is a fact, that in all the district of Chevreuse not a single edifice consecrated to religious worship was ever sold at a revolutionary sale: this the director of the domains of Versailles told me but the other day. There is proof positive."

The lieutenant was paying less attention to the termination of this discourse than to a large map of the department of the Seine and Oise

that hung suspended against the wall over the chimney. Instead of replying to it, he pulled from a pocket-book, which he never went without, a small pair of silver compasses and a black-lead pencil, with which he traced lightly on the map a square, whose base on the south followed the course of the Yvette from Chevreuse as far as Dampierre. The Versailles road, for the length of two leagues, formed the east side of the square; the north side, which was parallel to the river, extended the same distance in the direction of Mesnil; and the remaining side, passing through the wood of Levy, joined the base at the spot where Dame Bontemps had stated that she met the keeper.

"It is within this small square," said Sainville, "that we are to find the spot indicated: if I find it not there, I shall think as you do, that the information lodged is an imposition."

After two or three moments of attentive examination, he suddenly exclaimed—"I have it; I know the very place where these matters took place; it was at 'Our Lady of the Rock.' It is a lonely farm, or barn rather:—yes, just here, under the point of my compasses. The duration of the journey, the direction, all the information we have received, correspond exactly to the indications: and, what will surprise you a good deal, the gothic architecture which awakened your suspicions, is, on the contrary, proof incontestable of the midwife's veracity. Last year, while passing by chance that way, I had the curiosity to examine in what condition the church of the old monastery, which was suppressed long before the revolution, might be, and I then learned that it was used as a barn."

"Victory!" replied M. Dupuy, overjoyed

at discovering the clue to the brigands, which he thought absolutely lost; "you are right to a very T. I cannot conceive how it did not occur to my recollection, for I know 'Our Lady of the Rock' well; and I have seen before now the tombs of the old chevaliers with the three chevrons that are there."

With these words he hurried out to Dame Bontemps, and addressing her in a low tone, which he endeavoured to render severe, he said—

"You persist then in your refusal? you will not act as our guide?"

"You ask impossibilities of me."

"Well, well, we can dispense with your assistance. The spot to which you were conducted is known."

"Who found it out?"

"You must know, Dame Bontemps," said

the judge, with an air of importance, "that Justice has sharp eyes as well as long arms. To me the slightest indications are sufficient to enable me to discover secrets the most profoundly hidden. But it is to no purpose that I render important services to society, no one thanks me for them; while places of judges and of counsellor-auditors are thrown away upon people who are not fit to put the seals to their own patents. Interest and intrigue, Dame Bontemps—interest and intrigue are now, as they have always been, the only means of getting on in the world."

During this diatribe, which was pronounced with an emphasis that completed the absurdity of it—for poor M. Dupuy, the district judge of Chevreuse, occupied the only situation to which he had the slightest pretensions—the lieutenant addressed his officer, and ordered

him to send him a couple of gendarmes disguised. Even while writing the order, he could not help smiling at the praises, so slenderly merited, that M. Dupuy gave to himself for his pretended sagacity. He might, without impropriety, have repressed a display of vanity that savoured of impudence; but he thought, and justly, that it was best to be indulgent, and to use gentle language, when treating a weakness so very general, that no man, when he makes a sincere return of his own character, can declare himself wholly exempt from its influence. In the mean time, the magistrate dismissed Dame Bontemps, telling her to return next morning, at five o'clock, in order to accompany him to the ancient abbey of "Our Lady of the Rock." "I shall take my clerk with me," said he, "for we must draw up a state of the case; and, by squeezing close,

we shall all find room in my cabriolet. As to the lieutenant, he will escort us on horseback; and undoubtedly he will take such measures as may ensure a complete capture of the rogues. Not a man must escape from justice."

CHAPTER III.

NEXT morning, at break of day, Dame Bontemps, punctual to her appointment, appeared at the mansion of the judge. The clerk, a little short fat man, had got thither before her; and M. Dupuy, having mounted the two in the cabriolet, the seat of which they filled, placed himself in the middle, resting rather on the knees of his fellow-travellers than on the cushion of the vehicle. The lieu-

tenant had set out before, and waited for the party in the outskirts of the town. It was at first arranged that they should follow the road to Versailles, that they might turn off to the left where the car had turned; but on a little reflection they determined, as there remained no doubt about the identity of the place where the examination was to take place, that it would be much the best plan to go thither directly. Following this new arrangement, the judge and his fellow-travellers drove along the bank of the Yvette, until they got beyond the great park of Dampierre; and leaving on the right the road that leads to *Voisin-le-Bretonneux*, they gained by a bridle road the wood of Levy. Previous to entering the wood, the ruins of the *château* that bears the same name were seen in the distance towards the south-east, and M. Dupuy could not let slip so

excellent an opportunity of making a display of his local knowledge.

"You see," he began, "those towers and walls, now half in ruins? That old manor-house, some six hundred years ago, was the baronial residence of the lords of this wealthy valley, and their lands extended as far as the domains of the famous Simon de Montfort. Guy de Levis, who had married De Montfort's daughter, went the crusade against the Albigenses with him; but before he set out, he was anxious, from a regard to his native province, to found a monastery that might serve as a burying-place for the knights of his family. His intentions were religiously fulfilled by his descendants; and during many generations their dead were carried from the heart of Languedoc to 'Our Lady of the Rock:' we shall soon see the shapeless remains of their tombs, which the

Marquis de Levis got repaired but a short time before the revolution."

"What!" said the wondering clerk, "are we going to 'Our Lady of the Rock,' then? that ancient church, where all the country, for thirty leagues round about, went as pilgrims?"

"Yes, it was there that Dame Bontemps was conducted the night before last; and it was there that she witnessed matters which now call for most serious attention on the part of the magistrate."—"That spot," said the clerk, with an air of importance which he but rarely assumed, "is, it appears, destined to be the theatre of the strangest scenes!—I shall tell your worship what I saw there during the reign of terror. You were not at that time at Chevreuse; the rascals had you in the prison then, to which you now-a-days are in the habit of sending others; and as to you, Dame Bon-

temps, you were but a very little body. I was then a member of the district guard, and so I was under the orders of the revolutionary committee that governed Chevreuse. Now it happened that one Gracchus Dubois thought fit to denounce 'Our good Lady of the Rock' as an aristocrat, for taking upon her, he said, to work miracles, without permission from the constituted authorities. The president immediately made the patriotic motion to cast down an image which insulted the faithful citizens in such a way; and a decree was passed conformable to his wishes. Gracchus was ordered to execute the decree, along with other two members of committee; and he got as escort a detachment of the armed force, of which I was one. When we got to the abbey, our chief ordered the door to be broken open, although no one dreamed of refusing us access, and

placing himself in front of the good virgin, he addressed her in these words—'Look there, citizens! mark that bit of stone, to which the imbecile enemies of the constitution attribute supernatural powers! In the name of the law, let it fall this instant under the sledge-hammer of reason!' The order was no sooner given, than it was obeyed. One fellow got a lever, with which he made the statue shake on its base; another, climbing upon the altar, cast a rope with a slip knot round the neck; and the fanatical Gracchus, seizing the end of it, pulled it with such force, and so little precaution, that the statue was loosened from its lofty pedestal, and tumbling on him from the whole of the height, struck him down stark dead. The fall of so ponderous a mass shook the whole of the old fabric; the vaulted roof was rent with a terrible crash; and a knight that knelt on one of the

tombs, rolling down to the foot of the altar, was shivered in a thousand pieces. We all ran out, in the full persuasion that the patrons and founders, or rather, that the great devil himself was at our heels. No one looked behind him, much less did any one think about picking up the president. We got back to Chevreuse in great consternation ; but scarcely was the circumstance known there, when we received from the revolutionary committee strict injunctions that no one should mention it on pain of death."*

The clerk had just finished this strange tale, the particulars of which were known to but few persons in Chevreuse, when the old horse that drew the cabriolet stopped, discouraged by the appearance of the steep bank up which he had to

* An event similar to the one here recorded is said to have actually happened in 1794.—*Note of the French editor.*

travel. A smack with the whip sent him forward but a few steps, so his master thought it best to dismount; and his fellow-travellers, who were squeezed by the narrow vehicle, immediately followed his example. From the happy air of the trio, one would have said they had met with some fortunate adventure, yet the pleasure they testified was merely that of stretching their limbs at freedom. Alas! who has had so slender an experience of human life, as not to know that almost all the pleasures of this world arise out of the momentary cessation of physical pain, or the suspension of mental uneasiness?

When they had got to the top of the hill, and were within sight of the old wall that served as an enclosure to the buildings of "Our Lady of the Rock," the lieutenant went forward, in order to take such measures as were re-

quired, without giving offence to the inmates of the mansion. The judge, followed by his clerk and Dame Bontemps, entered the outer yard, the gate of which stood open, and from which a hay-cart was about to be driven by Bourgeois the farmer in person. Farmer Bourgeois had sufficient knowledge of his profession to know the good wool from the bad in his mongrel flock: he could also tell perennial sainfoin from annual; and, moreover, after divers years of hesitation, he had prevailed on himself to lay out a part of his lands in artificial grasses; and having found the benefit of this process, he contemplated getting rid by degrees of all the meadow on his farm. Wholly occupied in agricultural pursuits, and but rarely quitting his home, unless to go to market, he had the good sense to trouble his head but little in political matters. He was very well to live,

but he had not sufficient riches to make him cry up equality and hate the nobility, as the wealthy farmers his neighbours did. His countenance was vulgar, his presence heavy and clownish; he had never been in the ranks, as he had found means of evading the conscription by pretending disease, which cost him less than paying for a substitute. Speaking of him in a moral point of view, he was honest after the fashion of the world; that is, he did not refine overmuch in his notions of probity. He would not have taken a crown from his neighbour's purse, but if the crown happened to drop into his own, it was like to remain there. Farmer Bourgeois had been married for about ten years to a little dark-complexioned and somewhat swarthy dame, whose lively black eyes spoke a language which her manners did not belie. Active and intelligent, Madame

Bourgeois conducted her household and governed her husband with unlimited sway; she possessed, indeed, over the latter the superiority which a higher intellect and a more decisive character render easy of acquisition and of preservation in any connexion whatever. Her husband's affairs prospered in her hands; and she was sufficiently respected in the district, although such of the neighbours as had dealings with her complained that she was sharp even to injustice, or, as they expressed it in their country way, "she wished to take twice tithe of one farrow." They were compelled at the same time to confess, that if she loved her purse rather better than her neighbour, she was by no means without kindly feelings. It was admitted that she took a pleasure in conferring an obligation, provided it cost her nothing; and if, in rendering a ser-

vice, she saw the slightest chance of, at the same time, realising a decent profit, there was no bounds to her zeal. A carter, and a girl to look over the poultry, were all her attendants. The shepherd and his wife lived in a separate building, which in the times of the monks had served as a press-house.

The judge, who wished to use a little dissimulation, told the farmer, that as he was proceeding to *Mesnil St. Denis*, a village that bordered on the lands of "Our Lady of the Rock," for the purpose of sealing some instruments, he had found himself slightly unwell, and he was desirous to rest a few minutes. Bourgeois courteously begged the judge to walk into the house where he would find his wife, and calling to his carter, he bid him look after M. Dupuy's horse.

During this brief conversation, the clerk,

who along with Dame Bontemps had fallen a little behind, was regarding with attention the old church, now transformed into a barn: the outside was, with a very few alterations for the worse, in precisely the same condition as he had beheld it thirty years before. "I am as much at home here," said he to the mid-wife, "as if I had visited the place but yesterday. Do you see those broken panes at the top of that gothic window with some traces of armorial-bearings beneath them? That was the effect of a volley of musketry which we fired off on our arrival to show our hatred of the aristocrats; but, egad, when we went away we were not so courageous. I should like much to know in what state the inside is now. Let us go in and see." In vain, however, did he try the door; it was fast shut. They proceeded, in consequence, to join the

judge, whom they found in the kitchen chatting with Bourgeois, while his wife had gone down to the cellar to fetch some wine for her guest. When she came up, she looked with some surprise towards the strangers. "It is Bonfils, my clerk," said M. Dupuy; "and this is Madame Bontemps, the midwife of Chevreuse; you cannot but be acquainted with her."

He looked fixedly, while pronouncing these last words, at the farmer's wife; but, to his great surprise, she exhibited no signs of emotion. M. Dupuy began to lose all patience at this, and turning to Bourgeois, he said in a magisterial tone—

"Have you no declaration to make to justice in respect to what passed the other night in your dwelling? It was your duty to anticipate my visit, and that of the police."

This unexpected question confounded the

farmer, and made his wife tremble. On hearing the police mentioned, her cheeks were covered with a sudden flush; but perceiving her husband about to speak, and dreading that he might commit some indiscretion, she subdued her emotion, and said hastily, and with an air of embarrassment which she strove to conceal—

"What can any one have told your worship about us? Nothing ill, I hope. We possess, both of us, a reputation without blemish throughout the district; and if we should require sureties, we could get them even on the bench at Versailles, where my husband has a second cousin."

"We have nothing to say to that just now," said M. Dupuy drily; "characters and sureties make nothing against facts. Answer categorically to my questions, and without being confused. Bonfils, take down the answers."

"How came you to send, the night before last, for Dame Bontemps here; and what has become of the young female that she delivered?"

"I, your worship! I protest to you, before the God of truth, that now listens to us, I neither sent for this person nor for any other. This is the first time of my life that I ever set eyes on her: she is here, and she can declare it. Look me full in the face, ma'am; dare you maintain that you know me?"

The farmer's wife put this query with a sharpness that bordered on anger; for she sought to display the appearance of indignation that calumny naturally excites.

"Well, then, speak, Dame Bontemps," replied the judge testily, for he was at a loss how to explain such a positive denial; "do you persist in your declaration?"

"It is quite true," replied the midwife, "that I never saw this lady, nor am I any more acquainted with this apartment than with her. I never entered it: the circumstances that I witnessed passed in a barn."

"See now how she equivocates!" said the farmer's wife, interrupting her in a hasty and perturbed manner; "after declaring that she knew me, she attempts to shift about and tell us, God only knows what, about some barn! It is a shame! You see, gentlemen, this is nothing but a parcel of lies, invented to put honest people to trouble."

"I accuse you not," replied Dame Bontemps, with an air of dignity (for the dignity that accompanies innocence is peculiar to no rank in life); "but what I have said, and I should repeat it were death staring me in the face, is this, that I delivered, the night before last, an

unhappy female, who seemed to be in the power of a man, from whom she sought to save her infant in confiding it to me. I affirm, moreover, that it was in a barn, which every circumstance induces me to believe was connected with the house where we now are."

These last words produced a marked effect on Madame Bourgeois; an expression of joy sparkled in her eyes, as she said with a lively tone, and as if excited by some sudden thought—

"Well, your worship, since this woman pretends that she has been in some barn or other, I request that you will visit ours; and, if you find neither mother nor child there, I insist that you search the dwelling throughout, from the cellar to the garret. But let us begin with the said barn."

In finishing these words she took up a bunch of keys, and, followed by the whole party, she

opened the door of the ancient church. Sheaves of wheat occupied the farther end of the edifice, and seemed as if they had been heaped up there for a long time. There was nothing that indicated the place to have been at any period inhabited.

"Look here," said the clerk to the magistrate,—"here are the stones yet that served as a pedestal for the statue of the virgin; the fracture formed by the lever, that was used to overturn it, is still visible!"

"I also," added Dame Bontemps, "recognise this barn perfectly as the one to which I was brought. There is the pointed roof, and there are the carved pillars; the lamp stood on this ancient altar, and the couch was placed before it. I said, but a moment ago, that I could not affirm that I had ever been here; but now," added she in a raised voice, and assuming

a solemn tone, "I am ready to swear that I have: for it is impossible that there should be in the neighbourhood another place in all points so similar."

"Most assuredly," answered the lieutenant, who had just arrived, "there is not. There is no other church or chapel in the whole district in which divine service is not performed."

The unexpected appearance of the officer, accompanied by a couple of gendarmes, startled and confused the farmer's wife; but she soon recovered herself, and endeavouring to turn the matter off by an air of confidence, she deliberately proposed to M. de Sainville to conduct him through the house.

"Perhaps," said she with an ironical air, "we may, before we have done, discover Madame Bontemps' lying-in lady; in her

condition she would hardly take post and run away."

M. Dupuy, hesitating and irresolute, perceived with great chagrin that he was stopped short in the midst of his pursuit by the dishonesty of one of the women before him, and he knew not on which to let his wrath light—now suspecting the one and now the other: the lieutenant did not partake of his doubts. He did not find in the farmer's wife that air of truth and candour which had made him credit so readily the story of Dame Bontemps, and he was anxious for an opportunity of exposing her trickery. The habit of searching out the guilty who have such a strong interest in eluding the grasp of justice, the necessity of holding fast by the thread of truth through all the turns of the labyrinth, in which every art is used to bewilder them, naturally sharpen the wits of the agents

of all ranks who are appointed to watch over the public safety. It is not too much to assert, that this kind of chase sharpens even their external senses. It is with them as with professional huntsmen, who can tell from a slight trace hardly visible on the sand; from the branch of a tree whose leaves are a little rubbed; in a word, from marks that are invisible to others, the age, the height, and the strength of the animals that they are pursuing, as well as the route they have taken. The lieutenant was extremely able in the art of investigation; and he could seize with marvellous sagacity indications leading to conviction in circumstances which appeared altogether trivial.

As they left the barn, he noticed in the wet soil the yet fresh traces of two wheels that had passed by the side of the building.

"It is not long," said he carelessly to Bour-

geois, "since you were taking some fodder out of the barn."

"Not a truss has gone out of it," replied the latter, "for these three months, and more."

"Whence came these wheel-ruts then? They seem as if they had been made yesterday."

"That," said the farmer hesitating,—"that must have been my waggon, that was turned here in order to lay down a thousand tiles I ordered the other day to mend the roof with."

The lieutenant drew from his pocket his silver pencil, which had inches marked on it, measured the rut, and making the farmer observe that it was but three inches and a quarter broad, said, looking him steadily in the face—

"The wheels of your waggon are of the

standard breadth, and, of course, twice as broad as those that formed this rut: perhaps it was the car that brought Dame Bontemps here."

"My car!" said the farmer, colouring; "I have, at this moment, no other vehicle than that waggon which you see full of hay there, and the old close cart that stands beneath the shed down yonder."

"These ruts did not make themselves: you are attempting to impose upon justice, and you may perhaps repent it—."

He had not time to finish the sentence, when Dame Bontemps seized his arm, and pulling him into the barn, along with the judge, whom she held with the other hand—

"Gentlemen," said she eagerly, "come with me, you shall see now whether that woman or I merit your esteem most."

So saying, she quitted them with a glance of indignation at the farmer's wife, and running to the end of the barn, pulled away from behind the fragments of the altar some sheaves of wheat, and returning, displayed to the astonished spectators, with an air of triumph, the implements of her profession. It will be recollected that she had deposited them there after taking them from the bag, in order to put the infant into it.

"Every doubt is cleared away," cried the judge:—"arrest this woman Bourgeois and her husband, and every one that inhabits this den of robbers. I well knew that we should get hold of the guilty before we were done."

The farmer's wife, struck dumb by this order, and trembling in every joint, attempted in vain to utter some words of justification. Her voice failed her; a sudden paleness came over her

face; and at length casting herself, or rather falling at the knees, at the very feet of the magistrate, she sobbed out—

"Oh, for mercy's sake, dear sir, do not destroy us! I am—I am, indeed, an honest woman. I have done wrong, I confess, in concealing the truth; but terror—the threats made use of—and above all, the cursed money!—But you shall be told all. Come, husband, we must tell these gentlemen every thing; state every thing that took place: for me, I have not strength to do it."

The farmer was hardly in a better condition to give the information required of him than his wife was. He opened his large dull eyes, and attempted to speak; but he only stammered. The judge himself was confounded with what he had just witnessed, and did not know where to begin his queries. The lieutenant, who had

somewhat more firmness, raised up Madame Bourgeois, who still remained at his knees, and addressing in a gentle tone—

"Be composed; you have doubtless done wrong, extremely wrong, in imposing upon justice; still if, as I believe the case to be, you have not participated in these criminal doings, you have nothing to fear: but above all, disguise nothing, otherwise you shall be treated as an accomplice."

"Ah, sir," said she, wiping her eyes, "I shall tell every thing I know."

"You must first of all," said the magistrate, in a severe tone, "point out the guilty parties. The tall young man, where is he? What have you done with the female that was delivered in the barn? You are answerable for her."

"Ah, my God!" replied she, again bursting

into tears, " I know nothing of where she is now."

M. de Sainville, perceiving that this answer had excited the anger of the judge, again interposed—

" Give her time," said he, " to compose herself, or it will be impossible to procure any information from her. The house is watched; so that, if the criminals be still in it, they cannot escape." M. Dupuy yielded to this argument; and the lieutenant giving his arm to the farmer's wife, the whole party, with the exception of one of the gendarmes, who was left at the door for security's sake, again entered the house.

CHAPTER IV.

MADAME BOURGEOIS was some time before she recovered from the extreme agitation that she had been thrown into. When she became somewhat calm, the judge repeated the question that he had previously put—

"Where are the persons of whom we are in search?"

"They set out from this last night, and they forbade us, at the peril of our lives, to follow them."

"In that case I care very little what you have to say. I have a great mind to send you to prison in their stead."

The lieutenant observed, that if Madame Bourgeois were to tell exactly all that had come under her observation, they might collect from her declaration some valuable information.

"Well, then, speak, and speak clearly," replied the magistrate, with an air of indifference.

"It was last Sunday week," said the farmer's wife, "at the close of the day, about seven o'clock at night, that we saw a tall well-dressed young man come into the house, with a lady hanging on his arm. The lady walked with difficulty. A servant, carrying a bundle, followed them. They asked for beds for the night. The lady, they said, was far advanced

in her pregnancy, and found herself too much fatigued to reach the *château*, at some distance off, where she had purposed to pass the night. I told them that we were not in the habit of lodging strangers; but they insisted on it; and, as it would have been inhumanity to refuse them, I even let them stay, though I told them that they would be but indifferently put up. The young man said a night was soon over; that, besides, his sister was not particular; and for himself, he never slept sounder than on a truss of fresh straw. M. Bourgeois would not hear of that; and so he gave the gentleman the room that his kinsman, the attorney, occupies, when he comes to visit us. The young lady was put in a closet near to me. Next morning M. de Noirval, that was the young man's name, said to me that his sister, for whom country air had been prescribed, had taken a

liking to the place; and that if it were agreeable to us, it might be so arranged that she should remain. He at once, and without haggling, proposed a hundred francs a week, not including the provisions that we should furnish them: he added, that he would pay the money in advance; and I of course accepted so advantageous an offer. The first day they remained in the parlour; but as that was a confinement both to them and us, I thought of carrying a table and a few chairs into the barn, which, as you know, is lighted by windows, and it was there they spent their time in reading and writing."

Here Sainville interrupted the recital of the farmer's wife. "You unquestionably asked whence they came, and where they were going; or, at least, the name of the *château* where they were to have slept?"

"I had a strong desire to find out all that; but it was impossible, as you shall see. The young lady, whose stomach was delicate, took every morning some warm milk. When I carried it to her, the morning after she arrived, I found her bathed in tears. I sat down by her side, and began to console her the best way I could; to which she only replied, while she thanked me in a gentle voice, that to relieve her affliction was a task beyond my power. I was renewing my attempts when the young man came into the room, and told me, with a look of displeasure, that the doctors had ordered silence and solitude as best for his sister, and therefore he requested me earnestly to avoid all occasion of inducing her to speak. This request, or command rather, was accompanied with a waive of his hand that made me quit the chamber immediately. I did

not, however, rest there; and, in order to drive him to an explanation, I drew out a receipt for the lodgings for the week that he had paid us; and I made M. Bourgeois, on tendering it, request to know with what name he should fill it up. 'My name,' replied he, drily, 'is Noirval. I am waiting here for a medical person, who is to take care of my sister; as soon as he arrives we shall proceed to Versailles, where she is to be put to bed.' Seeing my husband about to continue the conversation, he stopped him short by saying—'I am not given to meddle in other people's business, and I expect others to act similarly by mine.'

"There remained but one resource more—that was, to pump the servant. He was not a Frenchman; but he loved his glass. One night that he was sitting by the chimney-corner in the kitchen, smoking his pipe, I offered him

a glass of my cherry-brandy; and asked him, at the same time, if he had been long in his master's employ.

"'Yes!'" was the reply.

"'How many years?' said I.

"He put down his pipe, and held up his two fingers.

"'Is he a kind man, this master of yours? I think he is a little hasty.'

"'As gun-*pouter*.'

"'What is his name?'

"'The Count—*tevils! M. Noirfal*.'

"'And the young lady's, that takes on so?'

"'I not know *tat*. *Dis* to your *healt*.'

"This was all that I could get out of him, and my husband was no luckier than I."

"But you can, at least," said the lieutenant, "give us a description of the figure and face of this mysterious personage."

"You have only to see him once," replied Madame Bourgeois, "in order to know him again. His is one of those faces that are never forgotten. He is tall, extremely well made, his features handsome, his eyes large and black, the eye-brows finely arched, the nose aquiline and rather long, his complexion brown, like that of the natives of southern Europe; and had he not spoken French so well, I should have set him down for a Spaniard or an Italian. Although he was lively and passionate, he would sit for whole hours without stirring, and apparently plunged in a profound reverie. I never saw such a changeable person: he smiled so sweet, and yet when he curled his brows his features assumed so terrible and so fearful an expression, that one would have trembled to meet him at the corner of a wood. He was proud too, but not haughty at all; yet he had

a certain way of delivering his commands, that you could not but obey them. His sister, if she were his sister, was the very opposite of all these. There was not the slightest resemblance in their faces, any more than in their tempers. She was goodness and sweetness personified: her complexion beautifully fair; her mouth small and rosy; with such two lovely eyes! but with a languor of expression about them, arising perhaps from the state of her health."

"You appeared to have some doubts just now about their relationship. What induced you to doubt it?"

"I thought it very unlikely that a young lady of her age, and so rich as she appeared to be, should be wandering over the country in such a way with a brother, and without even a maid-servant. I at first suspected that they

were two lovers; that there had been some runaway match, some private marriage; but I changed my opinion on that point, for I noticed that when he fixed a passionate regard on her, she turned away her eyes in a kind of terror. I don't know even yet what to think of it," added the narrator, in a thoughtful tone.

Judge Dupuy became fidgety, and appeared to attach very little interest to her details.

"You have been making a long story of it," said he to the farmer's wife, "and we have not yet got to the event that brought the officers of justice to the farm."

"We shall get to that by-and-bye. Three days ago," she continued, "the young lady began to feel extreme pain, and, as I thought there was no time to be lost, I proposed to

M. de Noirval to send for our own doctor; but he answered that his sister preferred a midwife. I told him, in that case, there was one at Chevreuse who was generally liked; and he then requested the car to bring her. When the horse was yoked, he made his groom set out with it, after he had given him his orders in a strange language that I did not understand; and he added at the same time, turning with a look of authority to my husband—

"'I pay pretty well for being master here: I intend to convey my sister into the barn, and I desire that no one intrude on us there this night. If any one dares to present himself in spite of my prohibition, I shall treat him as an enemy.'

"In pronouncing these words he showed us

the end of the pistols, which he always carried about his person."

"So," said the judge, "you saw nothing of what took place at the lying-in, then?"

"After such threats, how dared we attempt it?—Only, about two o'clock in the morning, hearing the dogs bark when the car came back, I got up, and saw from the window a woman, whose eyes were blindfolded with a handkerchief, led into the barn. When I saw that, I said to my good man, 'I feel alarmed at these doings; these people have given us a great deal of money, but I had rather than double the sum that they had never set foot in the house. If I did not dread the vengeance of that terrible man, I would go to-morrow morning and make a declaration before the mayor of Mesnil.'"

"You had nothing to do with mayors," said the judge, drawing himself up; "it was to me, madam, you ought to have addressed yourself:—but go on."

The farmer's wife continued her story:—"Next day, after dinner, a man on horseback, who seemed in a violent hurry, brought a letter for M. de Noirval. When he cast his eye over it he changed colour, and calling for M. Bourgeois, he asked him if he could spare his car again: but this time his object was to buy it, as well as the horse that drew it. He paid us, without question, the four hundred francs that we had given for them three years before; and then, addressing me, he said I must give him one of our mattresses, and help him to place his sister in the vehicle in the best way possible.

"'How can you talk, sir,' said I to him, 'of

madame's travelling in her present condition? Stop till the nine days are up at least.'

" He replied, that it was impossible to delay a single hour; and made me go into the barn, and tell his sister that they must immediately set out.

" ' Whither would you conduct me?' answered she with a faltering voice; ' leave me to die here.'

" He replied, that she should not die, and that he would take care that nothing was wanting to her comfort. While he was making his preparations I remained with the young woman, who, seemingly affected by my attentions, eagerly asked me if I could calculate on the honesty of the midwife that had been with her the previous night. I replied, that I had not seen the person that was with her; but if it were, as I supposed it to be, Madame Bon-

temps of Chevreuse, she merited every confidence.—You perceive, madam," added she, turning to Dame Bontemps, " that I did you all manner of justice."

Dame Bontemps thanked her by an inclination of her head.—" Soon after, M. de Noirval and his sister quitted us: the lady was laid in the bottom of the car, which was driven by the groom; the gentleman walked by its side."

" What route did they take?" said the lieutenant.

" On leaving they took to the left; but he expressly forbade our following him. My husband, however, was telling me this morning, that he believed, from the tracks of the car which he noticed in the wood, that they got round to the Voisins road."

"In all these matters," said the lieutenant, looking at the farmer's wife with an eye that was accustomed to penetrate through the thickest coverings of dissimulation,—"in all these matters your conduct has been irreproachable, if it was exactly in conformity with the story you have told us. But one thing makes me doubt this—I mean the terror you just now displayed in the barn. Something must have taken place which, as you imagine, has compromised you, and which you have therefore an interest in concealing."

These words, pronounced in a stern tone, renewed the agitation of *madame:* she reddened and hesitated; and the lieutenant, deeming the opportunity favourable for drawing from her a full and entire confession, added, with a loud voice—

" No prevarication with us! We must know what became of the infant of the unhappy lady that was delivered."

" It was not I—I swear to you, I know nothing of it—I know not—."

" You will perhaps find it out," said the irascible M. Dupuy, " in the prison of Versailles; whither I shall send you this moment, both you and your husband."

" They made me take an oath," said the farmer's wife, weeping, " to observe the profoundest silence."

" Such oaths are criminal, and bind not the conscience."

" Well, then, the infant was laid in a corner of the garden, behind the raspberry-bushes."

" Instantly conduct us to the spot."

" Thank God! it is no longer there. The servant that carried it thither, by his master's

orders, came to me about an hour afterwards, and said to me,—'My master would not care that the poor little creature which has just come into the world were out of it again; but it is not dead after all. I felt the heart beat, and so I covered it over with leaves instead of burying it. You are a decent woman; go, and save the life of the infant; but, above all things, breathe not a word on the subject.' I did not hesitate to follow the dictates of humanity, when so appealed to; and running into the garden, I found the baby, still breathing, in the spot that he had pointed out to me. I carried it immediately to our shepherd's wife, who lives in a separate house from us; she is a good creature, and mother of a family, and I was certain I could trust her. Her sister that stays at Mesnil is employed to nurse for the Foundling there, and she was to carry

the new-born infant to the hospital this very day. I told her to be sure to get a ticket. I expect it every minute, and when it comes, I shall deposit it in your hands."

"But why," asked the lieutenant, "seek to conceal from us so important a circumstance? You have done a deed which is so much the more praiseworthy, that it was not accomplished without considerable danger; and yet your most misplaced reservations gave you an appearance of criminality that might have put you to very great trouble."

"I confess it; but I felt persuaded that you were entirely ignorant of every thing concerning the child; and I cannot conceive, even now, how you discovered that there existed any desire to get rid of it. And besides, I must declare to you, that I was withheld by the terror which the gentleman had inspired me

with. Until I see him bound and ironed, I shall not feel myself safe from his vengeance. And it is to be considered also that he paid us handsomely, and therefore it was not our part to inform against him."

Madame Bourgeois had told the truth this time; for all that she described had happened exactly as she described it: one fact, however, she had not thought fit to mention—that, at the moment of his departure, Noirval had come into her room, and shown her a purse well filled with napoleons; and told her, at the same time, that its contents would be the reward of her discretion. "If," said he, "you do not breathe a syllable about any thing you may have seen or learned of what has been taking place under your roof, and if you refuse to answer any interrogatories that may be put to you that shall compromise my safety, then this gold shall be

yours; but if, on the other hand, through curiosity or fear, you be prevailed on to injure me, woe betide you! Good-by. VENGEANCE, OR GENEROSITY!—Such is my motto, and such the secret of my life."

There was in the look and tones of Noirval something so terrible and sinistrous, that they were capable of freezing with fear the stoutest heart. He had besides thrown out a tempting bait to the cupidity of the woman he addressed; and he had had occasion to observe that that passion governed her with resistless sway.

CHAPTER V.

When Madame Bourgeois had ceased speaking, the judge said, in a peevish tone—"You see how it is, M. de Sainville, our expedition has failed; we might just as well have remained at Chevreuse."

"I don't think so," replied the lieutenant: "we have picked up some valuable hints; and, besides, we have found the missing infant."

"I should have liked better to have laid

my hand on the missing rogue. That would be a capture of some interest. But for the present, at least, it is useless to think about it; and so you may as well call in your gendarmes."

As he was finishing this sentence, a loud noise, as of people disputing, was heard in the court-yard. Sainville sprung out, and in a moment afterwards he entered accompanied by his assistant, whom, along with two others on horseback and in disguise, he had stationed outside of the farm-house. The gendarme stated that he had arrested two young men, while attempting to get into the house by climbing over the garden-walls; that they had resisted, especially one of them, and refused to show their passports; but that, after an exchange of a few blows, they had been lodged safely in the barn, where they then were. "Here," said he, "is

a portfolio, that fell out of the pocket of the more obstinate of the two prisoners."

"We shall examine them at once," said the judge briskly, and rubbing his hands from joy at this unexpected prospect of a committal.

The officer went out, and soon returned with the prisoners, as well as the gendarmes who had arrested them.

The young men had no appearance of vagrancy: they were genteelly dressed; and in the apparel of him that seemed the elder of the two, there was a good deal even of nicety apparent. His pantaloons, with their large gathers and broad seams, fell over a pair of gaiters of ticking, that seemed as if pasted to his ancles. His shoes, much too fine for country wear, bespoke an inhabitant of the city; and his hunting-coat was cut after the very last new mode. The knot of his silk hand-

kerchief, which was tied lozenge-wise, and served as a cravat, had an air of fashionable life; and his hair-cloth cap, which was placed on the one side of his head, gave him almost a military air. The only weapon, however, that he carried, was an umbrella with a crooked handle, and of a common colour, and which was useful in two ways—it protected him from the rain when the weather required it, and assisted his oratory by giving additional force to his gesticulation. The evolutions of the silver-topped cane of a drum-major were not indeed more rapid, nor more expressive. The gentleman in question was short, and his frame was badly put together; the trunk was long, and the thighs short and slim. His eyes were black, and his eyebrows shaggy; and when he frowned, his countenance assumed a lowering and even ferocious expression. A slight obser-

vation, however, served to show that this was less the effect of his ordinary disposition, than of momentary mental excitement. His forehead was high, and his upraised hair formed a sort of crest on the crown of his head.

His fellow-traveller had an oval face, with the blooming and fresh complexion of youth: his eyes were blue; his hair light-coloured and curly; his air was jovial; his manners open; and the general expression of his face, carelessness and gaiety. He wore a great-coat of grey camlet, made wide, and soiled rather than worn, nankeen trowsers, and a black straw hat.

M. Dupuy proceeded to the examination of the prisoners without a moment's delay. The eldest stated that his name was David Collinet; that he was a native of Kerhonet, in the department of Finisterre; his age twenty-nine. When questioned as to his profession, he replied

with emphatic pride—" at present a man of letters ; but," added he, assuming a look of anger which he meant to be imposing, " I am as well, perhaps better, acquainted with the law of the land than those who listen to me and examine me: not only have I passed my examinations at Rennes, but I am a practising counsel at the bar of Paris. The magistrate will not therefore be surprised that I dispute the competency of his jurisdiction, and that I protest with all my energy against the power that he arrogates at this moment over my person, and that of my young friend. Yes, I protest in the most formal manner against this unprecedented and vexatious proceeding; and, at the same time, I reserve to myself full power and right to summon and prosecute to the utmost the authors, abettors, and executors of an outrage prohibited by the code, by the

rights of the people, and by the very charter itself, if it be allowable, I should add, to invoke a document which professed to be the guarantee of our liberties."

"Mr. Practising Counsel," replied the magistrate with affected phlegm, but in a tone half sour, half sweet, that ill concealed the ill-natured pleasure he felt in getting within his clutches a member of that modern bar, where he saw none but ultra-partisans of liberal ideas, and, by consequence, enemies of the ancient magistracy, "be calm. Passion sits but indifferently on persons of your profession. You shall have all justice. Gendarme, where did you arrest the prisoner?"

The gendarme replied, that he had caught him by the leg at the moment that he was scaling the wall of the garden.

"What excuse did he offer to you?"

" None.—' I am taking a walk,' said he; ' go about your business.' "

" My object," interrupted Collinet, " was to rejoin my friend, who was sketching the turret at the end of the garden-wall."

" It is true," replied the gendarme, " that the other fellow had crept into the turret; but it should be added that, when he saw his companion laid hold on, he picked a large pebble from the wall and threw it at my head. Luckily I was stooping down, and it only hit my hat, which bears the marks of it yet. I made him a sign with my pistol to get down the way he had climbed up, as speedily as possible; and whistling at the same time to my comrades, they came to my assistance, and we got hold of both the fellows."

" You must confess, M. Collinet," said the magistrate, " that it was a most unbecoming

thing in a barrister, who ought to show an example of respect to the laws and to exterior decency, to put himself in a position of being arrested as a malefactor."

"A malefactor!" echoed the man of letters indignantly; "dare you apply so insulting an epithet to a respectable citizen? one who performs, at one and the same time, the two noblest duties that it is given to a mortal to fulfil —the defence of innocence, and the not less glorious task of enlightening his country? I see how it is; you approve of the conduct of the gendarme in arresting me."

"Certainly, in such a case I should arrest a peer of France; that is," added he, as if astonished at his own boldness, "if I caught him *flagrante delicto;* you understand me."

"If I am not a peer," replied the author,

drawing himself up, "I have a relation who has been called to the peerage by writ."

"A Collinet, I presume," said the judge with an air of disdain; adding in a muttering tone—"precious successors of the dukes of Aquitaine and Normandy! *O tempora!* But let us go on to the next prisoner. What is your name and profession, young gentleman?"

"Hyacinthe Mitton, draughtsman and lithographist, born in Paris, and educated under M. Girodet."

"Show us your papers."

The young man drew from the pocket of his great-coat a large-sized *livret*,* filled with drawings and sketches, and handed it to the magistrate, saying—"This passport is as good as any other."

* This is the name commonly given to a book that soldiers carry about with them, and in which their names and descriptions are inserted.

The judge opened the papers; among which he recognised the castle of Dampierre; a view of the valley of Yvette; a half-finished sketch of the church of "Our Lady of the Rock:" there were also a few portraits of such persons as had particularly attracted the attention of the young draughtsman,—a beggar—a peasant-girl—a soldier on the march, and several others. Suddenly, Dame Bontemps, who was looking over M. Dupuy's shoulder, exclaimed—"There's the man that I saw in the barn! These are his very features, his dress, his shape; it would be impossible to give a better likeness of him." Bourgeois and his wife also recognised the figure of Noirval.

"You are doubtless acquainted with the person here represented," said the magistrate to Mitton.

"I know him by sight," answered Mitton, smiling.

"Have you seen him frequently?"

"Three or four times."

"You have been here for some time then?"

"We have been wandering about the neighbourhood since the beginning of the week."

"And you, Mr. Counsellor, what kind of connexion have you had with the gentleman whose portrait I hold in my hand?"

"I have already stated that I do not acknowledge your authority to interrogate me."

"Perhaps you will show more condescension to the public prosecutor of Versailles, at whose disposal I shall place you, if you persist in your culpable silence."

"You dare not," replied Collinet, with the air of a melo-dramatic hero.

"Don't be over sure, my dear fellow," said the lithographist; "this sour-looking gentleman will make good what he says, I fear; though,

hang it! I don't care about being sent to prison. I know nothing about those abodes of pleasure; but they must contain some capital subjects: famous caricatures the jailers and turnkeys—nice picturesque interiors."

"I am not," said the judge, interrupting him, "the dupe of the pretended indifference that you put on in order to elude the law. I shall write," he added, "to the director-general of the police, and enclose this portrait in order to complete the description of the party of whom we are in search; and these gentlemen must go under an escort to Versailles, where the court will pronounce their fate."

"You can do so," said Collinet in a solemn tone; "an armed and blind force is at your beck. But have you reflected on the consequences? Are you not afraid of the eloquent appeal that the friends of liberty will not fail to make in

my favour? They are still numerous in both chambers; and, looking to your own person, Mr. Judge, have you pondered on the thundering accusations that will fall upon you? You will be dismissed—ruined!"

"Attend you to your own defence, I shall take care of mine."

"Had the agents of government any prudence," continued Collinet, "they would see the propriety of acting with circumspection in the present state of men's feelings. Is it possible to blind one's eyes to the fermentation that now agitates the minds of the public? Amidst the conspiracies which are every where breaking out throughout Europe, the surface alone is at rest. A hidden fire is slowly eating its way, under the half-extinguished ashes, and asks but a single spark to bid it burst into the most terrible conflagration!"

" Paltry declamation!" said the magistrate; " a counsellor's gallimaufry, only worthy of contempt."

" Well, after all," (these words he spoke with the suppressed voice and lowering look of a conspirator,) " it is passing strange! the obstinacy and ignorance of a country magistrate may perhaps lead to the emancipation of my country. Ah, if it be so arranged, happy, a thousand times happy should I be to co-operate in the great work of regeneration by the temporary sacrifice of my personal freedom!"

" Egad, he speaks most eloquently!" said the young lithographist, addressing the lieutenant, with an air of as much ease as if he had had no interest in the discussion. He was proceeding, when Mr. Justice Dupuy, stung to the quick by the reply of the barrister, put an

end to further colloquy by ordering the gendarmes to remove the prisoners.

Whilst the warrant of committal was making out, and the horse that was to take him back to Chevreuse was being put to the cabriolet, the farmer, who saw it was his interest to stand on good terms with the justice, brought some glasses and a bottle of Andressy wine, whose reputation extends throughout the boundaries of the Seine and Oise, and which the great Henry used to look on as the best vintage in France. The lieutenant, in drinking to M. Dupuy, thought proper to represent to him that there was some degree of severity in sending two young men to prison, whose only crime was clambering over a garden-wall. It was enough certainly to justify their arrest by the officers of justice, but not to implicate them in a criminal transaction to which they appeared

absolute strangers. "In your place," added he, "I should let them off with a smart reprimand."

"I would do so willingly," replied the justice, "if the case regarded the draughtsman only, who seems to me a young giddy-head without malice and without thought. But that is not the case with the learned advocate. He is one of those demoniacs who, if they were allowed, would speedily bring back the age of anarchy and revolution. Did you mark with what insolence he declined my authority?"

"He was wrong, certainly; but don't you fear that you may be charged in your turn with having exceeded your powers? Consider, M. Dupuy, that, though the ministers are royalists, the public offices are still filled with liberals, who delight in an opportunity of

harassing any one that, like you or me, is attached to the old *régime*."

"But you forget the portrait that we have seized. That is a strong proof, and keeps my responsibility from all question. In fact," added he smiling, for the Andressy wine had produced in him the ordinary effects of the juice of the grape—frankness of speech, and a sort of jolly mirth, "let your good souls repeat as an axiom, that it is better a hundred rogues should escape than one honest man suffer,—a maxim which no doubt reads beautifully in a tale;—mine—I say this between ourselves—is, to prison with a hundred innocent, rather than allow one criminal to escape! What think you of that maxim, my friend?"

"A hundred! that is a great many;—yet there is some truth in what you say at the same time."

M. de Sainville was a humane man, and a generous one, though he said this; but our professional pursuits exercise a constant influence over our characters, and modify them without our being conscious of their power.

CHAPTER VI.

WHILST the magistrate was pursuing, with Dame Bontemps, his route back to Chevreuse, the prisoners, escorted by two gendarmes, followed that which led to Versailles.

The young draughtsman, who kept his gay humour without suffering any object of interest that presented itself to his eyes to escape attentive observation, went on cracking jokes and amusing his escort.

The companion of his mischance was, on the

contrary, silent and thoughtful. It was not the criminal act with which he found himself implicated that caused him the slightest disquiet; but he was by no means so easy respecting certain papers in the portfolio that had dropped from his pocket in his struggle with the gendarmes, and which they refused to restore to him. These papers, he was aware, might compromise not only himself, but a number of his friends.

The passion and pride, that constituted the ground-work of his character, had made him reply with haughtiness to the interrogatories of the magistrate; and, when the dispute got warm, his arrest, which he looked on as illegal, appeared to him an excellent occasion of acquiring celebrity and even glory at the expense of a few days' detention. The vanity of an author came in for its share. He pictured

himself drawing up an eloquent petition, full of powerful argument and sublime eloquence. The deputies of the opposition, with many of the greatest speakers with whom he was intimately acquainted, would not fail to lay hold of an incident so opportune for the cause of freedom; they would make it the subject of a solemn discussion. The chambers, the public, would have no other subject of conversation but him; and, in the meanwhile, he would compose essays and pamphlets, which the newspapers of his party would laud to the skies: they would run through two, three, perhaps four editions! Such were the ideas of fame and of profit, which are but seldom separated in the head of a *littérateur*, that suppressed, in M. Collinet, all sentiments of prudence and moderation.

But three hours' travel on foot, between two

gendarmes, and the sneering looks of the passengers, which their case did not fail to attract, had sufficed to cool down his political and literary enthusiasm. He now began to ponder, somewhat sorrowfully, on the least injurious consequences of this mishap—to be kept away from his business and his amusements for several days, perhaps weeks:—for Justice resembles disease in this, that her speed in pouncing on her victims is as remarkable as her dilatoriness in letting them go again.

Mitton, perceiving his friend a prey to this melancholy humour, in order to rouse him, gave him a smart slap on the shoulder, apostrophising him at the same time with—

"What a pretty tom-noddy you are, with all your wit, to get us into such a scrape as this! If you had been content, instead of arguing the matter with the magistrate, to

state the simple facts of the case, to tell him, for instance, that you had had the honour to accompany me in a tale-hunting excursion, by which it was your intention to profit, by describing with your pen those objects that I drew with my pencil—and my sketch-book and your scrap-book would have sufficiently proved all this—we should have been released at once. It is true, the scaling of the wall remained still; but, as we had taken nothing and broken nothing, it is evident that we should have got rid of that for a rebuke at most. The officer of the gendarmes, who seemed an honest fellow, would have taken our part, and the justice must have given in. But no—thy stubborn head had determined otherwise. I am enraged when I think that I promised positively to be at the green-room of the *Variétés* this evening at seven."

"You think of nothing but amusements."

"And what the deuce came I into the world for else, Mr. Philosopher? I console myself, however, with the prospect of our triumphal entry into the capital of the department of the Seine and Oise; especially, as I hope it is, if this be a market-day. What an interesting scene! Can't you, even at this distance, behold the gaping boobies of the town and country opening their large eyes and larger mouths, and staring at us with as much eagerness as if we were two wild beasts; and the jokers of the crowd making game of your military cap, and taking their fun out of your elegant umbrella? Then you'll get into such a passion! and that will give them a laugh the more! Egad, it would make a most capital caricature; it will furnish you with a famous chapter for your novel.

These last words, which brought to his mind a cherished work, about whose composition he was almost as busy as about his politics, made the man of letters smile. In the mean time, they had passed the gate of St. Cyr, and were approaching the ancient residence of the kings of France, precisely at the point where the highway to Bretagne runs through the little park, separating the orangery garden from the *pièce des Suisses*. Had the project, which was worthy of the magnificence of Louis XIV., been completed, this piece of water, with its beautiful outline and vast extent, would have become the port of the Maintenon Canal; that undertaking, whose immense aqueduct presents, even in its present state of dilapidation, as imposing a monument as any that has been since reared by the sovereign people. At present, broad alleys and pleasant walks circle about the lake, beautifully

contrasting with the height that hangs over the south side, crowned as it is by a fine clump of majestic pines. Exotics in the central provinces, these trees look as if they were the representatives of our mountains on a visit to their king. The beauty of the scenery attracted the attention of the young lithographist, who gazed on it now for the first time; but on casting his eyes towards the left, he was still more delighted by the view of the orangery. Young Mitton possessed in a very high degree the feeling of the beautiful; or, in other words, he possessed an exquisite taste—that noble instinct, that precious gift which Heaven accords only to its favourites, and which ensures to them during life the foremost rank and most advantageous place in the great theatre of those wonders that nature and art exhibit. He marked with admiration the skill with which the architect had taken ad-

vantage, in constructing the palace of Versailles, of the inequalities of the ground; and how judiciously he had employed the Tuscan order, with its embossments and imposing columns, in the exterior decoration of the vast vaults of the mansion; from which two magnificent sweeps of steps, of the finest proportions, lead to the terrace above; making the whole, when viewed from the low ground, look like the basement of the palace of light and elegant Ionic architecture, which, according to a later design, rises proudly over it.

The state of the sky at that moment added to the loveliness of the scene. The mid-day sun shot down its rays on the wing of the *château* that they were contemplating, and heightened the splendour of the golden tinge that time had imparted to it; whilst the balustrade and the trophies that crowned the roof were sharply out-

lined in the dark-blue ground of a thick cloud, which enveloped the whole of the northern portion of the horizon. The fore-ground of the picture was enlivened by the borders, set thick with thousands of flowers, that form the parterre of the private garden of the orangery. A few shrubs of a milder clime, myrtles, rose-laurels, orange-trees of every variety, mixed with marble vases, edged the compartments of the parterre, and surrounded the fountain, from which rose a sparkling and powerful *jet-d'eau*. Amongst the orange-trees was conspicuous that which bears the name of the "great Bourbon," and which the public owe to the munificence of Francis I. This tree, which is of a most venerable age, is still as leafy and vigorous as in the spring-tide of its life; and appears to feel no more of the touch of time than has the glory of its planter, the restorer of letters and pro-

tector of the arts. Our young draughtsman, who was captivated with the scene, endeavoured, from a sentiment natural to a kindly disposition, to make his friend a participator in the pleasure that he experienced; but the attempt was a vain one. The discouraging answer of the barrister was—

"I can see no ground for such violent delight in the contemplation of a parcel of stones, heaped up on one another by a despot at an immense expense."

"Why," replied Mitton sharply, for he had more historic lore than commonly falls to the lot of painters, "you must at least allow that this palace and these gardens cost France nothing;—the Dutchmen paid for them."

"A pretty philosophical answer," said Collinet, with a disdainful air; "you speak as if the Dutch were not men, and members of the one

great family. What am I saying? At that time the Batavian nation held a much higher rank, in the eye of reason, than our own. They were republicans—freemen—Protestants!"

As he pronounced these words, a confused noise was heard in the environs of the palace, mingled with tumultuous acclamations. In a moment the higher parterre and the terrace were covered with a multitude of people, while others were seen hastily descending the great stairs and the ramp that leads along the grove. The monarch had just arrived from St. Cloud, where he was residing with his family, to visit the gardens of Versailles, which had been recently repaired. He was seated in an open carriage, with the two princesses his nieces by his side: Monsieur had gone forward with the Duke d'Angoulême to St. Cyr, where the pupils of the Royal School were exercising with blank-

cartridges. The king was dressed in blue uniform, without any decoration, except the epaulets, which had crowns of gold instead of stars. A hat with a white plume covered his venerable forehead. Age and sickness had not yet broken down that majestic figure so finely suited to the offspring of so many kings; his eyes had, indeed, lost somewhat of their fire, yet he still preserved that imposing look, which none ever beheld and forgot. His air was serene; and benevolence and affability tempered the dignity which gave its habitual expression to his physiognomy. He appeared deeply affected by the reception that the inhabitants of Versailles gave him as they crowded to meet him, with every demonstration of sincere pleasure; and hung round his carriage, which they were freely permitted to approach, the officers of the guard and the pages in wait-

ing being his only attendants, for the escort did not enter the gardens. Though the feelings of affection in the crowd were the same, the expression of them varied very sensibly with the age of the individuals. While the young people, lively and curious, pressed close to the wheels of the *calèche*, and impeded the advance of the horses, their ancient habits of respect acted as a restraint upon the old, who, with moistened eyes and hat in hand, modestly ranged themselves along the hedge, and only testified their good wishes by a few faltering words, when the keen and piercing glance of the monarch happened to distinguish among them some ancient and faithful servant broken down by time and distress, and smiling kindly upon him, by his consoling regard revived his sunken heart, and made him forget whole years of suffering.

The princesses had their share in the acclamations of the crowd; and with the shouts of "Long live the King" were mingled cries of "Long live *Madame*." It was with a view to the assertion of their peculiar claims on her notice, and to put her in mind that she had been born among them, that the inhabitants of Versailles did not salute the daughter of Louis XVI. by the title of her husband: a name which he subsequently rendered so glorious. And when they addressed her younger sister as "mother of the Duke de Bordeaux," there was something very affecting in this selection of a title which spoke of love and of hope, rather than one which recalled the idea of recent losses, and was pregnant with tearful recollections.

The king, on his arrival at St. Cloud, entered the gardens by the *grille du dragon*.

The statues and marbles and bronzes of the magnificent piece of water had been lately cleaned: the large fountains were playing; and he gazed with pleasure for some minutes on a sight which never fails to attract crowds of strangers, and which has a most magical effect, especially when the rays of a bright sun are darting through the spouting waters. He then visited the baths of Apollo, and the colonnade; and lastly, he drove along the alleys of an extensive grove, that had been newly formed, after the model of the garden at Hartwell; that honourable asylum, where he had supported adversity with sufficient constancy to enable him to review the scenes of it with pleasure. The orangery was the limit of his drive.

As soon as the two gendarmes of Chevreuse, who with their prisoners were advancing to meet the carriage, perceived the royal party enter,

they halted and drew their swords; and Mitton hastily pulled off his hat. Collinet, however, in order to avoid that ceremony, stooped down to the ground, and pretended to be tying the points of his shoe. His comrade perceived this petty piece of trickery, and reproved it.

"Would it not be best," said he, "to salute the king as every body else does, rather than to prostrate yourself before him in that fashion?"

When the king departed, the prisoners pursued their journey to the town; but they did not meet on their entrance with the honours of a mob triumph, as Collinet had feared, and as his companion desired. The streets were deserted, for the people had crowded to the park to enjoy the sight of the sovereign; and, in addition, the storm which had been long gathering at that moment burst, and a heavy shower scattered the few idlers that remained.

It was to no purpose that Collinet unfurled his umbrella; he was wetted to the skin in an instant. Mitton was also soaked, but his joyous temper made him discover subjects of consolation in whatever happened; and he exclaimed, as he entered the prison-door—"After all, in such terrible weather it is much more comfortable to be here than in the open air."

I shall not affirm that the sight of the grated doors, and the creaking of the bolts, and the aspect of the jailer, and, above all, the darkness of his new dwelling, would not soon have destroyed his habitual gaiety. Happily, his stay in that mansion of sorrow was not prolonged beyond the night.

CHAPTER VII.

THE magistrate, to whom the justice had addressed the packet belonging to the prisoners, was named Dusellier. He was an intelligent, well-informed man, about thirty years of age; his manners were correct; and he possessed, in an eminent degree, the first qualification of a judge—integrity. His failings were ambition, vanity, enviousness; a combination of qualities by no means rare. He was son of one of the head clerks in the office of the

minister of justice ; and his uncle was a General Dorval, whom Napoleon, in recompense for his long services, and yet more for his unbounded devotion to his imperial person, had enriched with numerous gifts, and dignified with the title of count. That uncle had a son, and the two cousins went to school together; but the only result of this arrangement, which ought naturally to have produced a lively and durable friendship, was a species of rivalry at once envious and malevolent. Dusellier, who was a diligent student, and a clever one, carried off the prizes, and gained the first places; while young Dorval, an indolent boy, of small parts, and always at the bottom of his form, had no other revenge than to tell his companion—" Work away! sweat blood, sweat water; you'll never be any thing but a petty underling, while I shall be an officer and a

count like my father, and perhaps a duke." The vanity of young Dusellier was deeply wounded by these predictions, and the more so that their accomplishment was but too probable; for the obscure rank of his father did not admit of his embarking in the career of ambition with the advantages of the son of a man whose fortune was already made. When, however, he had finished his studies, and, by the interest of his uncle, had obtained the situation of deputy to the imperial *procureur* at the court of N——, the excessively high opinion that he entertained of his own talents made him believe he might yet arrive at some of those eminent posts to which, subsequent to the revolution, many persons who had started from a lower rank than his had nevertheless attained. The restoration deranged his plans: in 1815, during the hundred

days, he again caught a glimmering of hope, and eagerly signed the additional act; but on the return of the king, he gave himself up for lost. Thanks, however, to the extreme indulgence of the ministry, to whom, indeed, at that time, liberal opinions formed a ground of recommendation rather than a reason for rejection, he was nominated judge of the court of Versailles. Even this dignified and permanent office was far from satisfying the desires of an ambitious man, who looked on his elevation to the bench as an exclusion from the titles and dignities that had been the object of his longings from his earliest youth; and what aggravated the wound that his vanity had received, was to behold his cousin Dorval figuring in the royal guard, although he had fought along with Napoleon at Waterloo, and raised to the same rank that he would have held had

his old master been the victor. With a temper thus soured did M. Dusellier betake himself to the Bourbons; he wished their fall, not because he hated them, but because he saw in legitimacy an insurmountable obstacle to his chimerical ideas of elevation. He could not conceal from himself the fatal consequences that must necessarily ensue to his country from such a catastrophe; but the ruling passion stilled the voice of duty and the suggestions of reason. Two journals, which were then famous, contributed to foster these fatal illusions —we mean the *Minerve* and the *Renommée;* and they were still more confirmed when the revolutions in Spain, and in Naples, and Piedmont, burst forth; for he had no doubt that these were the preludes to what was about to take place in France. Indeed he believed, and

he was not alone in that belief, that the insurrectional movement would perform the tour of the whole globe. He felt strongly tempted to take an active part in those great changes, not that he was impelled to such a line of conduct by the sort of fascination that leads on youth to attempt whatever is new and hazardous, or that he was at all inclined to labour for the welfare of his country at his own cost. His motives were much less dignified. His only object was to procure for himself, from among the spoils of the vanquished party, a situation of more power and influence. But, restless and dissatisfied as was the temper of Dusellier, his character was timid even to pusillanimity. Perhaps this defect arose out of his feebleness of constitution and indifferent health: certain it is, that he was about that time attacked by a complaint

in the chest, to which he afterwards fell a victim.* He confined himself therefore to the expression of his sentiments to such persons as he knew to be liberals; and if to those he did not say, in so many words, that the government ought to be overturned, he proved at least very clearly that the existing order of things ought not to be maintained.

When M. Dusellier opened the packet that had been addressed to him by the district magistrate of Chevreuse, he saw at once that the two young men were utter strangers to the crime under investigation. But the papers in the portfolio of Collinet, he perceived, might give rise to proceedings of another description. That young man had had the imprudence to preserve the letters, which proved that he was

* He died in the autumn of 1824, at the *Eaux Bonnes*, in the department of the High Pyrenees.—*Note of the French editor.*

a member of those secret societies, which were at that time every where exciting the spirit of revolt and of sedition. It is true they were not signed; but it was easy to see that they had been written by persons holding important offices in the civil and military departments of the state. The magistrate balanced for some time as to what use he should make of these papers; his first feeling, conformable to his duty, was to send them, along with the prisoners, to the director-general of the police: this would have shown his zeal for the royal cause; but looking on that cause as irrevocably lost, he was unwilling to let slip an opportunity of strengthening his interest with the party that was about to ascend to power. He therefore summoned the prisoners to his presence, asked them a few questions very politely, and after receiving a satisfactory explanation of their

journey to Chevreuse, he conducted the young barrister into his closet, and put the *porte-feuille* in his hands.

" Your innocence has been clearly established, and I am about to give orders for your enlargement: I do this with so much the greater pleasure, that I see by your correspondence your sentiments are patriotic, and that you are connected with the leaders of a party which has the honour and glory of the country at heart."

The barrister was confounded by this address, and dreading lest a seeming conformity of principles, which he had so little reason to expect, concealed some snare, he hesitated to reply. The judge, as if reading his feelings, went on—

" I do not ask you," said he, " although perhaps I might legally do so, the names of the

persons who wrote these letters; nor do I require any details respecting deliberations, in which, in my present position, I cannot share: you can easily appreciate the delicate nature of my present conduct, and I am persuaded that it will never quit your recollection; and that you will not omit to mention it to those of your friends whom a more strict investigation on my side might place in a very disagreeable position. One thing, M. Collinet, I must say to you; you cannot use too much prudence and circumspection in these matters. In affairs of high importance, no paper ought ever to be preserved that can in the slightest degree compromise ourselves or our friends. In future, never keep any document that is not essential to your enterprise. I hope it will succeed; I hope that an energetic and liberal government will again place France at the head of the nations. I

hope also, that such a grand regeneration will take place without drawing any more tears from humanity. The impulse once given, the consent will be universal: there will be but a few isolated attempts at resistance to put down. The events of the 20th of March afford a good augury: unquestionably the king will adopt the same line of conduct now that he did on that occasion; he will never dream of exposing himself or his family to the deplorable consequences of an useless defence. I should, for my part, be deeply grieved were any misfortune to happen to the venerable old man, or to any of the princes of his family. In fact, let people say what they will, the Bourbons are not a bad race; but they are surrounded by those that are. And, were they not so, how can we hope that men born in a court should rise to the level of their times and of circumstances? They

can withdraw peaceably to Hartwell, or any other retreat, and leave us to regulate our own destinies. We have no reason this time to fear a coalition of the powers. Europe is now enlightened by the indifferent success of the second restoration, and has renounced the chimerical project of subjecting thirty millions of Frenchmen to a government whose feebleness and unskilfulness they despise."

Collinet, whose confidence was completely restored by this confession of faith, instead of thanking the judge for his extreme pliancy, told him, with an air of easy assurance, that every thing was provided for; that the army was as secure as the people; and that as for foreigners, they cared very little about them. "They dare not stir," said he arrogantly; "for, thank Heaven! they have enough of business of their own on hand not to trouble themselves

with ours. Believe me, sir, there is a mine under every throne in Europe. Their sceptres are worm-eaten: fanaticism and superstition are disappearing like the phantoms of the night, when the bright day appears. Yes, our regeneration will be complete, glorious, eternal! As to the Bourbons, in whom you seem to take a lively interest, in which I confess I do not participate, their insignificance is their best protection."

"What I said," returned the judge, "about the safe conduct that should be given to the Bourbons, was much more for humanity's sake than for theirs. You will allow that that interest ought to be held sacred by all the friends of freedom."

Their conversation ended here, for the judge was in a hurry to expedite the order for their enlargement. Collinet, on receiving it, thanked

him coldly, and with an air of dignity. As for Mitton, on quitting the prison, he leaped for joy, and swore devoutly that no one should ever catch him in another.

M. Dusellier, who had failed in his object, remained pensive and mortified. Nothing can be more humiliating than the situation of a man who has betrayed his trust; and instead of receiving the reward he expected for his meanness, is treated by those whom he sought to serve with indifference or contempt.

CHAPTER VIII.

NOTHING but the most urgent cause could have induced Noirval to leave the farm-house of "Our Lady of the Rock," and to expose to the hazard of a journey, in her precarious condition, a young lady in whose safety he took so lively an interest. But the information he had received admitted of no delay. He was told that if his retreat was not discovered, the persons who were in quest of him had reason to suspect that he was in the neighbourhood of

Versailles; and that such was the extreme activity of their search, in a short time it would be impossible for either himself or his companion to escape it. Determined to get to a distance from his late residence as quickly as possible, without exposing the life of the female that he conducted, he travelled all night across the country; nor did he halt until break of day, when he stopped at a little inn in the outskirts of a village about six leagues distant from the capital, and on the high-road to Orleans. Before proceeding farther in the direction of an asylum the prospect of which was held out to him in that quarter, he deemed it best to confer with the personage who had shared with him for a long time in the grand business with which so many interests were connected. He set out for Paris about night-fall, mounted on the horse that had drawn the car, after leaving

strict orders to his groom to allow no one whatever to have access to his sister, from whom his absence was concealed. The people of the house imagined that he was only gone in order to procure a doctor that lived in the neighbourhood.

Noirval alighted about ten o'clock at one of the houses in the Faubourg St. Marceau; it was the abode of a foreign nurseryman, whose address had been sent him. He knocked at the door, and when it was at length opened, he presented a card, on which were marked the letters P. M. N. C., and was immediately admitted, and conducted to a green-house at the foot of the garden. A parcel of frames piled up on the floor of the building concealed the entrance to a cellar, the spiracles of which opening into an old cart-shed, were covered over by clematis and other creeping shrubs.

In this place a bed had been prepared for him, and the gardener accosting him respectfully, told him that he was ready to execute the orders that had been transmitted to him.

Next morning a carriage halted at the house of the nurseryman, from which a lady, followed by a servant in plain clothes, alighted. She came to purchase flowers, which she often did; and one of the lads having informed the gardener of her arrival, the latter ran hastily to wait upon her. The lady visited along with him a number of flower-plats; selected some shrubs, which she had conveyed to her carriage; and, as the day was fine, she ordered the servant to mount and look after the pots, and bidding the coach drive on, said she should return to town on foot.

But this lady will act so important a part in the whole of our history, that it is absolutely

necessary to enter into some details respecting her person, her character, and her rank in life.

The Countess Stanislas Gradiska was a princess of the house of Sobiuska, and allied, in consequence, to the most noble families in Poland and Lithuania; nor did the elevation of her mind belie the dignity of her birth. Inheriting a vast fortune, she was forced by her parents at a very early age to marry Count Gradiska, palatine of Sendomir, a man twenty years older than herself, and who, notwithstanding her beauty, neglected her for the company of an old mistress.

The youthful countess, irritated rather than jealous, determined to quit his society for ever; and as the lapse of time produced no alteration in her resolution, a few years after their separation the pair by common consent took advantage of the singularly accommodating spirit

of the Polish Catholic church, and were regularly divorced. The palatine took another wife immediately, but the countess preserved her independence for the rest of her life.

The first use she made of it was to visit Italy. Admiration of the fine arts made her linger for nearly a year at Rome, and for six months at Florence; after which, from a curiosity of another description, she came to visit Paris. The language and the literature of France were familiar to her; and she longed to inspect narrowly a nation at once warlike and witty, trifling and formidable, whose name, during every period of history, has been famous throughout the world, and which was then making the continent tremble with the terror of its arms: it was at the period of Napoleon's marriage with Maria Louisa that she arrived in the capital of France. The countess was then

in the splendour of her youth and beauty; and her understanding was not less excellent than her figure was fascinating. The dignitary who had in charge to arrange the household of the new empress, offered her the situation of lady in waiting, well assured that Bonaparte, with whose views on Poland he was acquainted, would approve of such a choice; but she cut short the negotiation by a reply not less proud than dignified—

"I am the wife and the daughter of a nobleman—I will not become a servant."

This expression was not reported to the emperor, who would not have passed it over. He knew her personally, and he had displayed a marked respect for her from the period of a long conversation that he had had with her at one of his drawing-rooms. It was after that

conversation that he was heard to observe—"That fierce Sarmatian has the soul of a man:" a high compliment from a prince who knew nothing of gallantry, and who expressed on all occasions, and without periphrasis, his opinion of the comparative inferiority of the female sex. The judgment formed by the countess of Bonaparte was so just and so concise, that its express terms have not been forgotten. "'Tis a pity," said she, "that he lacks generosity; he would be a hero else." We are inclined to believe that impartial posterity will come to the same conclusion as the Countess Gradiska; but our object in giving it here is to elucidate *her* character, not *his*. In her person the countess was tall and elegantly formed; but what specially distinguished her among her fair countrywomen was the dignity of her presence;

in respect of which, she might have been worthily described in the words of Virgil, *Incessu patuit dea.*

The sentiment that her appearance generally inspired, was admiration mingled with respect. The regularity of her features left nothing to be desired; and yet the statuary would rather have taken her for a model than the painter for a study. The expression of her countenance was pensive and thoughtful; and an attentive observer might have marked in the slight, but distinctly defined depression between her eyebrows, the traces of habitual reflection. The natural expression of her eyes was sweet merely; but when she became animated, they flashed with all the lightning of genius.

Nature, by a special favour, had granted her an exception from the failings of her sex: she was neither vain, envious, nor giddy; and,

what is even more extraordinary, she was indifferent to dress, and despised coquetry as a girlish amusement unworthy of a woman of understanding. The victories to which she aspired were indeed of a more elevated character; and wholly occupied with high political interests, and seeking to influence the destinies of nations, she aimed less at touching hearts than ruling minds.

The energy of her soul was not less remarkable than her understanding was comprehensive: her resolutions were strong and steady; and having once pledged her word, no sacrifice ever kept her from redeeming it. Naturally generous and beneficent, she despised money; and she had contracted a taste for magnificence, from the almost eastern habits of the great lords of her native country; but she was far, like many of them, from allowing it to

draw her into wasteful or ridiculous expenses, that could only terminate in the abandonment of character: her pride not less than her prudence made her an economist. To those who observed the air of indifference with which the countess contemplated occurrences to which the common run of people attach so much importance, she appeared cold even to insensibility; but the change that the recital of a generous or noble action operated on her countenance was miraculous. Her eye sparkled with heavenly fire; her cheek flushed, and her whole soul seemed filled with the sentiments that had prompted the act which she was admiring. Once, and once only, she yielded to the influence of love. During her first residence at Rome, among the host of adorers whose homage her beauty attracted, she had singled out a young Swede of superior under-

standing and splendid courage; but the instant she discovered that the dignity of his sentiments did not correspond to the nobleness of his figure, her nascent affection passed away, without leaving any more trace of its existence than the flame that is severed by the sword does on the polish of the steel. Soon after this, indeed, another passion, the love of her country, absorbed the whole faculties of her soul; and Poland, her native land, trampled under foot and parcelled out among strangers, was thenceforth the constant subject of her thoughts.

"Alas!" exclaimed she, with a republican eloquence worthy of a matron of Sparta or of Rome; "is it then true that the descendants of the fierce Sarmatians, of those warriors by whom Vienna was saved and Moscow conquered, now bend under the yoke of Austria

and of Russia? And, to fill up the measure of our humiliation, has Prussia, our vassal, a province dependant on our crown, taken a part in the bloody spoliations of our conquerors? Save that of the dispersed and expatriated Jews, there exists not in the world a fate so forlorn as ours! Had the chances of war compelled us to submit to the arms of a victorious enemy, a general and spontaneous insurrection might have burst our chains. The history of the Genoese, and their expulsion of the Austrians, may show us what, in such circumstances, a small and weak people can effect. But they retained their integrity as a state! What can our now disunited and disintegrated fragments effect? Their most energetic movements are but the convulsive throes that the galvanic pile excites in the members of an inanimate corpse!"

Such were the patriotic complaints of the countess: but her character was not one that exhausts itself in sterile wishes; for while there remained the slightest shadow of success, resignation appeared in her eyes an inexcusable act of cowardice. Feeble therefore as were her hopes, she had never renounced them. It is true she did not participate in the illusion of many of her countrymen when, seduced by the fallacious promises of Napoleon, they imagined that they beheld in him the restorer of their independence; and when he fell, she applauded the dispensation as a just punishment of his unmeasured ambition and heartless perfidy. At the restoration of the monarchy she indulged a hope that the deliverance of Europe would bring with it the deliverance of her country; but that hope was speedily abandoned. The Holy Alliance, even while proscribing

future partitions, confirmed by their sanction those that had already taken place; and they went farther in their contempt of sacred rights, when, despite of the lawful appeals of an alarmed people, they offered up the republic of Genoa as a living sacrifice to a chimerical balance of power, the nature of which it was impossible for the most acute to discover.

After such an abuse of their power, how was it possible to expect the re-establishment of Poland from the generosity of the allied sovereigns? It was evident that there remained no chance for that unhappy country, but in such a universal rising as should shake the thrones and rouse up the nations of Europe, and once more put all their interests on the hazard of the throw. But what were to be the disorders! what the wars! what the calamities of every

kind that must infallibly result from such a moral earthquake! Humanity shuddered at the bare contemplation of them. But no consideration of such probable mischiefs could check the countess; who beholding in the whole world but one subject worthy of regard, and that subject her country, was resolved to brave all chances for the purpose of serving it. She did not shut her eyes to the difficulties nor the dangers of the task; but she was determined to risk her fortune, her repose, her life, if called on; and the greatness of the sacrifice that she was prepared to make silenced every scruple that she might otherwise have felt in respect to the morality of its object:—an error, by-the-bye, which is extremely common to persons of bold and enterprising disposition, who are constantly disposed to imagine that the dangers which accompany their projects can

bestow legality even on those that common justice disavows.

As soon as the Countess Gradiska had taken this extreme resolution, she began to look on herself as in a position of hostility with all established governments; and bending her morality to her inclinations, she bestowed on herself, if we may so express it, general letters of marque against them, from the idea that any thing was allowable provided it annoyed the enemy. She began by a rigid examination of the elements of discord and revolution that existed in different countries of Europe; and she did not fail to discover that, in spite of the longing for repose which is generally perceptible after agitations so long continued, there were every where to be found a number of individuals whose interests or whose hopes had suffered by its creation, and who ardently

wished for the destruction of the existing order of things. These she perceived to exist in different proportions in different countries, and she saw that they were no where more numerous than in Italy, where, as every information tended to show, they were ripe for revolution. It was in Italy that the countess had passed the first two or three years which succeeded the congress of Vienna. She visited first Venice, then Milan, Rome, and Naples; in all of which cities the result of her observations was uniform,—that in that fine country the governments of the various states were not tyrannical, and therefore were not hated; but that of the whole of them the administration was weak and lightly esteemed, in consequence of the ultra notions of liberty unfortunately cherished by the very small proportion of the community that had either skill or means to judge of them.

In the north the leaden sceptre of Cimbria weighed down the Lombards; and the harshness of her Teutonic forms seemed so much the more intolerable, that the amenity of the French had in some measure atoned for their injuries: but apart from this local feeling, the general sentiment that pervaded the peninsula was a longing for independence, and a desire to shake off the yoke imposed on it by foreigners. The re-establishment of the integrity of Italy once presented to the imagination, along with all that train of glorious recollections which the grandeur and power of ancient Rome inspired, it may be easily conceived how such a noble but chimerical anticipation might seduce the hearts of the generous, and convert the most peacefully disposed into the boldest of innovators. But were it to be truly inferred from this general

concurrence of opinion, and from the small energy of the Italian governments, that the latter were destined to crumble at the first shock, it would by no means follow that the revolution which was then contemplated was to be either solid or permanent in its results. The Italian character is violent and irascible to madness; but it is as easy to quench as to kindle its fury. Though bold and hardy in a mere tumult, they are soon subdued by the appearance of a disciplined corps; and those who sport with stilettoes tremble at a bayonet. Lastly, which is the most fatal circumstance in the prospects of Italian independence, the regular army of the interior are not less capable of withstanding a foreign force than their unarmed countrymen are of withstanding them. Events have proved this; and such events did not astonish the Countess Gradiska, nor those

who, like the Countess Gradiska, had a thorough knowledge of Italy. A considerable time previous to the Neapolitan revolt she had determined to recross the Alps, convinced that it was in France only there was a chance of finding sufficient intellect and energy, and such a nursery of soldiers, as was requisite for the renovation of Europe.

It was in vain that the patriots of Naples, with whom she had been connected, endeavoured to retain her among them. "Archimedes," said she, one day, in that figurative but uninflated style which marks for the most part an elevated mind, "asked for a fixed point from which to move the world: the point is found—it is at Paris. There must be placed the fulcrum of the lever that is to work the changes we call for; here, the ground is not solid enough: traversed in every direction by vol-

canoes, it contains within it sufficient seeds of combustion, but we walk upon an abyss the while. Should some sudden and terrible shock cast down all that at present stands fast, what fruit would the present generation of men derive from the work of destruction? They would be swallowed up or ruined; and how many ages must pass away until the lava stream became fit for vegetation, or a crop covered its surface?"

On her arrival in Paris, the countess adopted a judicious plan of conduct, and one in perfect accordance with the dignity of her character. Steering a middle course between the extremes of imprudence and dissimulation, she refused to meet, unless in secret, the members of committee, the director, or the heads of the liberals, to whom she had letters; but at the same time, even in high society, instead of applauding

declamation in favour of arbitrary power, which was then so much the fashion among persons of the court and of fashionable life, she used to ask with an air of wonder, how it had happened that the ancient *régime*, so much boasted of and so deeply regretted, had not strength, sufficient strength, to maintain its position.

One circumstance gave her great facilities in preserving that kind of seeming neutrality, which concealed the most active measures of hostility against the government. She happened to be resident in Warsaw when Louis XVIII. was there in 1801. She was then very young (she was not quite eighteen); but she was already distinguished by her beauty and her wit, and was considered one of the principal ornaments of the capital of Poland. The little French court testified their gratitude towards her, for the lively and open indignation that

she manifested on the occasion of a cowardly attempt, which had nearly succeeded, to poison the august exile. The prince also knew the countess personally; he had often met her at the table of her aunt, the Lady Grand-Marshal of Lithuania; and he had been affected by the marked deference that she paid to him, compared with the habitual boldness of her manners and language. The homage which she felt a pride in rendering to the venerable chief of the Bourbons sprung out of the feeling of commiseration naturally excited in a noble mind by the misfortunes of royalty; but it was easy for Louis to confound that exalted sentiment with the attachment of party, which so many strangers displayed towards his cause; and she was indebted to this mistaken notion for the kindness that the emigrants constantly showed her, both during the exile or after the restoration: a

kindness which protected her moreover from the suspicions, to which the connexions that she had formed in Italy with men whose opinions were more than suspected might have subjected her. When her conduct was casually blamed, she was invariably excused on the ground of her attachment to the arts and literature; for it was a fatal singularity of the times, that the most forward of the advocates of revolutionary novelty were the artists, the scholars, the wits,—in a word, the whole of the intellectual men of the peninsula.

In France, her interviews with those persons who in mutual concord with her were labouring to overthrow the government, were conducted with the utmost secrecy; and they generally took place at the nursery to which we adverted at the commencement of this chapter, and of which a Polish gardener was

the proprietor. This man's name was Riuski; he was born on the lands of the family of Sobiuski, and was the son of the head gardener of the *château*. At a very early age, the uncle of the countess, having found him an intelligent lad, took him into his service, and made him his attendant during his travels. Riuski ever after continued attached to the count's household. With him he boldly shared all the dangers of the civil war that followed the famous confederation of Bar: of which patriotic league, worthy of more success than it met with, the Count Sobiuski was one of the chiefs. When it was put down, the latter, with many of his companions in misfortune, came to Paris, where he sought, in the bustling life of a voluptuous capital, to find relief against the melancholy thoughts which the subjection of his country inspired. The sacred fire of liberty

was not however quenched in his noble soul, and he was on the eve of rejoining the illustrious Kosciusko, when a mortal disease seized his frame. He was not forgetful in his last will of his faithful servant: he left Riuski a considerable sum, which he laid out in the purchase of a bit of marsh-ground in the Faubourg St. Marceau, on which he again betook himself to the occupation of his fathers; and his business was in a prosperous condition when the countess arrived at Paris. That lady took a strong interest in the brave man who, in more than one rencontre, had hazarded his life to defend that of her kinsman; and, with her wonted generosity, she advanced to him funds to purchase a piece of land that was required to enlarge his garden. This service affected Riuski deeply; but had she wished to command his utmost services, or to dispose of his life,

she needed not the tie of personal gratitude for that purpose. He entertained towards her, or more properly, towards her family, that kind of humble devotedness, of which the traces have ceased to be perceptible in the western states of Europe ever since the destruction of the feudal system, unless perhaps amongst the mountain clans in the Highlands of Scotland, or among the slaves of an indulgent master in the Antilles. The sort of dependence to which we allude is absolute, and the submission it inculcates is blind; and yet the yoke which might appear so heavy, is not the less ardently cherished.

There can be no question that this sentiment, which is one of great force and of absolute permanency, springs out of the servile condition of those who entertain it; yet, notwithstanding the baseness of its origin, it is

impossible not to acknowledge that its elements are both noble and interesting. Far from being inspired by fear or by interest, it inspires into its possessors a courage that despises all sacrifices, that braves all dangers, and that not unfrequently participates of genuine heroism.

The countess disposed of the house of Riuski as its absolute mistress; she did not even deem it necessary to inform him of the motives that induced her to do so; she merely commanded him to be secret as to what passed there, well knowing that she would be more faithfully served in that respect by her old servant, than if she had committed her important charge to the keeping of the most illustrious hands, though influenced both by the principles of honour and the feelings of friendship.

CHAPTER IX.

THE young man, whom the Countess Gradiska had come to the mansion of the nurseryman for the purpose of visiting, has as yet been known to our readers under the name of Noirval; but it is now time to inform them of what they must ere this have suspected, that he had assumed a fictitious name only to escape from the inquiries of which he was the object. Hitherto appearances have presented him under rather a disagreeable aspect; but, before

proceeding to his condemnation, it is but just to make due allowance for the extraordinary circumstances that decided his fate. They are not devoid of interest, insomuch as they connect themselves with events of no mean importance. In giving an account of them, we shall not, though entering on our task at considerable length, seek to extenuate his faults; we shall detail facts with all the impartiality that History has a right to demand, although the historian but rarely obeys her behests. It is not unlikely, after being made acquainted with the irresistible fatality which at last sunk this unfortunate young man in the abyss of ruin, that, notwithstanding his passionate violence, which was, however, redeemed by a noble and generous nature, and by qualities of the heart as high in their order as were the endowments of his understanding, the reader will be inclined

to conclude that he was as much victim of his ill fortune as of his crimes.

Count Jerome de la Cesia was a descendant of one of the most ancient families in Lombardy; the principal property of his house was however situated in Piedmont. Left an orphan at an early age, he was reared under the tutelage of his uncle, an old general in the army of Sardinia; and by him he was placed in the college of Pavia. Nature had bestowed on young Cesia a wonderfully retentive memory, and not less judicious than retentive: his progress in every department of study was great, and he soon left most of his fellow-competitors behind him. He excelled in bodily as much as in mental exercises; and from his boldness, activity, and vigour, he was the leader in every sport, and in every enterprise that asked for its accomplishment, either courage or address.

In consequence of these qualifications, he soon gained over his companions that species of authority, which is almost involuntarily yielded to acknowledged merit, whenever it is found in an energetic and impetuous character. It must be admitted, at the same time, that he had more abettors than friends, for he was eager to master it on all occasions; jealous of the slightest contradiction, and never forgave the smallest offence. His ardour and perseverance in defending those who declared for him, and whose interests he maintained with even more warmth than he did his own, were, it must be added, as great as was the opposition he displayed towards his enemies.

At the age of eighteen De la Cesia had passed through the whole of the classics; he was intimately conversant with Latin and Greek, and French he knew as familiarly as

his native tongue; his progress in mathematics had not been so great as his uncle, who had served with approbation in the engineers, and who intended that his nephew should also be a member of that corps, desired. The artillery of Piedmont, we may remark, has at all times been excellent. The wishes of the young count were not in accordance with those of his relation: his lively and brilliant imagination rendered the dryness of the exact sciences a subject of invincible repugnance to him: he was, besides, fond of horses, and had become a skilful sword-player under the tuition of an able master; an art that requires as much power as activity: he therefore requested a commission in the cavalry in preference; but, as his request was not backed by his uncle, it met with a refusal. From that moment he renounced the profession of arms; and shortly

after he left Pavia for Naples, in order to arrange some pecuniary affairs with a relation of his mother, who held an important office at that court.

Rome lay in his way, and he stopped there for some time. The splendour of its modern edifices affected him less than the magnificence of its ancient remains. Those imposing ruins, which attest to all times the greatness of the former masters of the world, redoubled the zeal that he felt for the cause of liberty, the sacred source of so many wonders and so much power; and he vowed in the bottom of his heart, and he registered the solemn vow in an ode which became highly popular, that he would devote himself to her holy cause. His talent for lyric poetry was indeed great; and though his lines were not without faults, yet the fire, energy and elevation of thought that

they displayed, and the sublimity to which they not unfrequently rose, more than redeemed their defects. Such at least was the opinion of one of the strangers then at Rome —we mean Lord Byron, at that time a very young man, but whose nascent fame nevertheless had already attracted great attention; who, notwithstanding his retiring character, was anxious to be introduced to the author of a poem for whom he felt a secret attachment, founded on a similarity of character that was very strongly marked.

Cesia, indeed, as was his lordship, was full of noble sentiments, often degenerating into pride: he had the same bold and comprehensive but irregular intellect; the same contempt of common prejudices, pushed to the neglect even of customary decencies; the same bold scepticism in respect of matters the most sacred;

and both these presumptuous young men, by a very ordinary mistake, had confounded a passion for absolute and unmodified independence, which is an unattainable chimera, with the worship of genuine and practicable freedom. There was, however, an important distinction in their respective tempers, arising perhaps out of the different elements in which they had been born and reared. Both were keenly susceptible of insult; but, in Lord Byron, a dignified feeling of contempt speedily quenched all purpose of revenge. The Italian, on the contrary, was as implacable as he was vindictive, and he sought to justify the permanency of his resentment by maintaining, that he who could forget an insult, was incapable of being grateful for a favour.

Lord Byron, at the time of which we are treating, was on the eve of setting out for

Greece, where a few years afterwards he was destined to terminate his career, and he was anxious for the count to accompany him thither. The latter declined the invitation with regret on account of indispensable business which detained him at Naples, but he promised that the moment it was expedited he would join his friend.

It was in the capital of the Two Sicilies that Cesia first united himself with the heads of the famous Carbonari, who have for so long a time agitated Italy and disquieted the whole of Europe. The object at first was both just and legal;—it was limited to the relieving of the country from the hypocritical tyranny of Napoleon. The organization was powerfully and skilfully combined; but it was with sorrow that the young count perceived that fanaticism and superstition were the principal springs of

their political association; and yet, what other means could be found for stimulating or alluring a people at once credulous and fearful? He had now been about six months in Naples, and no prospect of a grand movement had yet presented itself; and the private business which had attracted him thither was far from being terminated. Wearied out therefore with the tardy progress of both, he invested a celebrated lawyer with full powers to settle the latter; and influenced by a passion for travel, the first longing of superior minds, he left his friends to settle the former, while he passed the Alps for the purpose of visiting Switzerland and the north of Germany.

This was in the commencement of 1813. The terrible Russian campaign had decimated the armies of France, and given to the long-oppressed Germans an opportunity, and

inspired them with a hope of recovering that independence which they had fought but feebly to defend. For more than two years previous, throughout all the states of the Rhenish confederation, secret societies under the direction of bold and skilful leaders had been preparing men's minds for the struggle. The principal focus of these patriotic clubs was in the great universities, to which, from time immemorial, thousands of young men from all parts of the country were in the habit of having recourse for the finishing of their education. The professors were indeed at the head of the plots. They substituted in lieu of the ordinary course of ectures a species of instruction which every age listens to with avidity—the doctrine of resistance to oppression ; they exhibited a revolt against the French as a moral obligation, and insurrection as the most imperious of duties. There was

on this occasion no scruple to alarm their timorous consciences: their object was not an attack on legitimate government: on the contrary, by overthrowing the existing tyranny, they delivered at once the sovereign from his thraldom, and restored independence to the subject. What noble and powerful motives to action!—to avenge insulted national honour —to punish humiliating and harassing domination—to place the lawful crown once more on the head of its virtuous and venerated owner! So impelled, it may be supposed the unanimity of the German scholars was equal to their zeal. The moment that the signal was given, the warlike and enthusiastic youth rose as one man, threw aside their books, and rushing to arms, hurried along with them by their patriotic example the whole population both of the country and of the town. That rising forms a solitary

feature in history; never before had men treading the peaceful walks of literature, grave doctors, whose appointed task it was to moderate the violence and to restrain the headlong passions of youth, been seen changing all at once their sedate profession, stimulating the ardour of their disciples, and combating and conquering at their head.

It is a very old observation, and one of which every day's experience proves the truth, that in all grand popular movements there exists a communicative power, as real as it is inexplicable, which influences the spectators to take an active part in the events of which they are witnesses. This species of attractive sympathy, which springs doubtless out of the spirit of imitation common to all animated nature, is sometimes so powerful as to subjugate the will, and to suspend the exercise of reflection; and

such was the feeling that young Cesia experienced in the contemplation of that tumultuous agitation of an entire people intoxicated with hope, and on the eve of snatching back their plundered rights. Too keenly affected to remain inactive while the struggle for liberty was at hand, the count determined to become the associate of so glorious an enterprise: he requested admission into the battalion of Berlin students; and his lofty presence, his fine figure, and his martial air, notwithstanding his foreign birth, procured him an immediate and pressing welcome. In a very short time his superior intelligence and enterprising zeal gained for him the confidence of the chiefs of the party. He served in the foremost rank of the grenadiers in the memorable battle in which the French, who were menacing the city of the great Frederic for the second time, were finally

repulsed. The action was warm and murderous; repeated bayonet charges took place during its continuance; and recruits without discipline—the young Prussians we mean, found in their exalted patriotism a courage and power that enabled them to resist those formidable veterans who had triumphed over the most warlike legions of Europe. In the midst of the *mélée*, Cesia, who was active as he was bold, had the good fortune to save the life of his captain. The captain was a professor more skilled in handling the pen than in handling the sword; but the exploit cost the count dear, for he received a severe wound, which for several days placed his life in danger. One of the young princes of Prussia, who was witness of this brave action, untied the iron cross from his neck, and presented it to the young Italian, along with the brevet of a

commission; but the count accepted of the former only; and taking advantage of an opportunity when he could retire with honour, he quitted the army never more to join it. It was not that his principles were changed, but his warlike ardour was effectually cooled. Who is there that in the heyday of his youth has not felt the seductive influence of a military habit; the magical effects of a brilliant uniform of splendid arms; and above all, of those warlike airs, those spirit-stirring marches, which rouse, electrify, and agitate young hearts? But once in the army, once fairly in the field, how numerous are the discomforts! Toil, bad weather, the listless and wearisome bivouac, privations of every description; and for those who love reading and study, that worst of all privations, want of books, to say nothing of the petty details of a subduing and monotonous

service, that soon serve to render disgustful a career, which at first sight presented nothing but danger, and the laurel crown by which it is followed. It was not these causes alone that determined La Cesia to quit the standard of the coalition. In his leisure moments, and when meditating on the morality of his undertaking, he had put the question to his conscience, and that severe judge had told him that nothing could justify the shedding of blood but a case of legitimate defence. This idea, which is so conformable to the precepts of natural justice, had presented itself to his mind on more than one occasion from the opening of the campaign, but it excited scruples that terminated in nothing. It required for his conviction some stronger argument, and the pain resulting from his wound finished what philosophy had begun: we are seldom truly sensible of our faults until

we suffer from their consequences. The remainder of the year had elapsed before the count's recovery was completed. In the following summer he quitted Berlin for Vienna, where he arrived at the moment when the allied sovereigns, on their return from the memorable march to Paris, had assembled in congress to lay down rules for the future regulation of Europe. His noble birth gave him admission to the highest circles of that capital, where nobility alone can enter; and his merits and his agreeable manners rendered him a favourite when introduced. It was at this period that he became acquainted with the Countess Gradiska, whose beauty he admired, and whose elevation of sentiment and comprehensiveness of understanding gained an entire conquest over him. He then for the first time imagined that the dreams of his

imagination were about to be realised; that he had at length found in one and the same person that miraculous combination of perfections of every kind which he considered alone worthy of his homage, and which he had hitherto sought in vain. He attached himself in consequence to the countess, and seriously laboured to gain not less her love than her esteem. She was flattered by his attentions. She was wont to receive with a sort of disdainful indifference such as was paid to her by the idle young men that abound in all great towns, with whom gallantry is their sole business, and who make seduction their trade; but she had too much discernment to confound the noble Italian with such. The qualities that distinguished him, his superiority of judgment, his brilliant and fertile imagination, his settled and delicate taste, all these she could justly appreciate; and

her interest in him increased when she perceived the grandeur of his views and the constancy of his character. There was besides between them that conformity of opinions and of sentiments on things essential, which predisposes to friendship: in perfect accordance on political topics, both were passionate lovers of freedom; both detested absolute power; and both equally detested equality. The latter system they considered to be alien to human nature, which, in creating differences so palpable both in the moral and physical world, could never have intended, they concluded, to bestow on mankind a perfect parity of rights. They allowed that justice required that these rights should not be abused any more by superiority of talents than by superiority of physical power; but they contended against the absurdity of permitting an ignorant person or a fool

to have a legal right of administering the affairs of state, when it was obvious that, in order to direct such complicated matters aright, so much knowledge and so much talent were absolutely requisite. This doctrine may be disputed, and probably will be for a long time to come; and we may add, that should mankind at any future period agree as to its principles, the probability is that as many new discussions will arise out of the mode of their application. We pretend not to settle these weighty matters; it is enough for us to observe that greater concessions could hardly be expected from a grandee of Poland whose lands were cultivated by serfs, and from a feudal lord who but a short time before had still retained his vassals. The prejudices of our birth, the mode of our education, our position in society, all tend, without our perceiving it,

to modify the sentiments and opinions of the most generous hearts and the most comprehensive understandings. Whatever justice there may be found in the common observation in respect of the Italian count and the Polish countess, what was probable did not fall out. A reciprocal esteem produced, it is true, a very intimate connexion between them ; but love had no part in their intimacy; and for the simple reason, that there existed not between them that secret and inexplicable sympathy which binds the heart, and not unfrequently the reason, according to its capricious will. This the countess declared to La Cesia with the frankness that characterised her ; adding, "I know that you deserve an undivided attachment, and my affection towards my country is such that I cannot offer you but the second place in my affections." Cesia had too much

pride not to forget his love when the proffer was so refused, at the same time that the enthusiasm of the countess in favour of freedom kindled up all his ancient ardour in the pursuit of it. He entered into a league, determined to serve along with her that cause which in both their eyes had hitherto triumphed but by halves: they mutually swore fidelity to each other; assumed the endearing titles of brother and sister; and, we may add, that never was any connexion formed by blood more tender nor more durable. From that moment they hardly ever quitted each other's company; and the public, which was completely deceived as to the nature of their connexion, set it down as a matter of certainty that it was a love intrigue that bound them, as it had bound so many before them. A small portion of the community, not so much given to believe evil of their

neighbours, seeing them both free, both equal in birth, and in every respect suited to each other, both in fortune and years, imagined that they had entered into a marriage which they did not find convenient to declare. But the affectionate dignity on the one hand, that the countess maintained towards him, and on the other the behaviour of Cesia towards her, which were too cold for a lover, too tender for a husband, in a short time completely bewildered their conjectures.

In the mean time, mighty events were succeeding each other with rapidity. Napoleon had left the island, but two days' sail from our coasts, and close to those of Italy, to which he had been so inconsiderately relegated; the torrent of the hundred days had swept over France; the allied sovereigns, who had scarce got over the terror caused by the sudden over-

turn of that restoration which they had believed to be so firmly consolidated, had drawn tighter the bonds of their union. Conquerors at Waterloo, their only consideration was to guard themselves against democratical attacks, from which no country is wholly exempt; and they put off, in consequence, to an undefined period, the performance of those promises made in the hour of trial to the people whose generous efforts had saved their crowns. In respect to states previously partitioned or previously annexed, such for instance as Poland, Venice, the whole of Austrian Italy, they were for once and all rased from the list of independent states. In the condition in which Europe was placed, the politicians of congress argued that prudence, nay safety, and a regard for their preservation, imperiously called on them not to deprive themselves of any means of defence; for

whatever was given up, it would not fail to augment the power of the revolutionists. Strengthened by such reasonings, there was nothing that did not seem allowable and legitimate; for it is well known that the morality of courts, like the religion of hypocrites, is of a very accommodating character.

In this state of things the countess determined to quit Vienna, where her stay was useless, so far as the accomplishment of her grand projects was concerned; and she accordingly set out for Italy, whither La Cesia accompanied her. He had at first thought of visiting Prussia, where liberal ideas were more widely diffused, and of a much higher order than in the south of Germany, and where the connexions that he had kept up had assured him that a portion of the army even had been shaken; but he saw that these plans were not

sufficiently extended or matured to offer any present prospect of success; while in Naples and in Lombardy, and even in Piedmont, the revolutionary party was much more intimately bound together, and the time much more opportune. It was in Italy therefore that, in concert with his friend, he set himself to labour with as much activity as perseverance to insure the success of a conspiracy, to the extent of whose ramifications the recollections of mankind have preserved no parallel. In fact, it extended from Cadiz to Edinburgh; and passing through Paris, it touched Berlin in the north, and Vesuvius in the south. In the east it penetrated Poland; and the insurrection which, about the same period, broke out in the Russian guards, proved that it was not unfelt even in the most remote and isolated quarters It forms no part of our plan to give a detail of

the great events of that memorable period of incredible and short-lived success to the revolutionists. Nor shall we attempt to describe the sombre and threatening aspect that the political horizon at that period presented: Spain in flames, from the Pyrenees to the Columns of Hercules: the whole of the middle of Italy in a state of insurrection: England agitated by the plans of the radicals; and her unbridled population, in their blind fury, breaking and destroying those machines which constituted her wealth; while others, associating in thousands under the name of "Blanketeers," were marching on the alarmed capital: Germany, where fanaticism was whetting the knives of devoted assassins: France covered with plots, insulated it is true, but all having relation to a common centre—the malcontents in the east scarcely disguising their criminal exultation—

the army doubtful—the administration irresolute and disunited—the monarch feeble and dying: in a word, that vague but universally diffused uneasiness which, like the wind that precedes the storm, announced some mighty but undefined commotion. It will be the task of the historian to represent to our descendants those scenes of a drama so replete with change, the *dénouement* of which was at length happily brought about by the famous discharge of artillery on the Bidassoa. Our task is limited to the description of the part that La Cesia took in these events. He was at Naples when the revolution broke out. He was connected with the chiefs of the patriotic band; and yet he was astonished at the smallness of the effort necessary for the completion of the insurrectionary movement that overturned the absolute government there. The Spanish constitution,

which was known only by name, was proclaimed without opposition; only that in lieu of cortès, a parliament was summoned that exercised supreme authority. The capital, the provinces, were equally submissive; yet was the discontent universal, though the numerous lodges of the Carbonari, under the direction of a central committee (*alta vendita*), stopped short, by the terror they inspired, the expression of the popular dislike; and no opposition presented itself to the armed force at their command, except on the opposite side of the Straits. But though, contemplated from within, the Neapolitan revolution appeared sufficiently consolidated, from without a powerful enemy had sworn its destruction. Austria judged well that her dominion in Italy would be imminently compromised, should any thing like liberty be established in a powerful neighbouring kingdom;

and the statesmen who directed her councils decided that it was essential at all hazards to destroy in the bud this evil example. It was with this view that the congress of Laybach was summoned; and with this view did Austria seek to inspire into the allied monarchs her own fears, while she was assembling a powerful army in her hereditary dominions in order to put down their cause. In the mean time, the forces which Naples had to oppose to her were by no means despicable, at least in point of numbers. Fifty-four thousand soldiers, all well disciplined, had assembled under the regular standard of the revolutionists; and there were not less than seventy thousand of militia to guard the passes of the precipitous mountains which divide the middle of Italy from the one sea to the other. There were besides several battalions of volunteers; some bearing the name

of Brutii, others of Hirpini, and others of Samnites, names famous in the pages of history, but which, when so misapplied, only rendered more conspicuous the weakness of those that had adopted them. In spite of these elements of resistance, Cesia was far from feeling assured when he considered the incredible weakness which those same troops had displayed under the command of the notorious Mack, and still more recently, when no less than eighty thousand Neapolitans had fled and disbanded before an enemy very inferior in numbers, notwithstanding every effort of their king, a soldier of fortune, but whose talents, it is true, were not at all equal to his courage. He concluded that the only means of preserving independence in the south of Italy was to produce a diversion in the north formidable enough to alarm Austria, and to confine her efforts to the safety of her

own possessions. Such a measure was a bold, but by no means a rash one: the following details will enable our readers to form a judgment of it. Authentic information had recently been received from Turin by La Cesia, that the Piedmontese army, still animated with that military ardour which had given it the foremost rank in the armies of Napoleon of all the nations that he had treated with or subjugated, consisted of more than sixty thousand effective men, comprehending in that number those contingents which were bound to join immediately on being summoned; and that out of this number not more than eight days would be required to bring at least twenty thousand into the field, fully equipped for a campaign, and properly supplied with artillery. Now were this vanguard, it was concluded, to pass the Tesino, and to advance by forced

marches on the Milanese, where the garrisons had been imprudently reduced, it was obvious that they would drive every thing before them, pass the Adda and the Mincio unopposed, mask Mantua and the whole line of the Adige. It was admitted that an isolated division could not maintain themselves for any length of time in so advanced a position, but the mass of the Piedmontese army would speedily join; and besides, it was more than probable that the population of those provinces which bore with most impatience the yoke of the Austrians would join their deliverers. Could such an insurrection be pushed as far as Venice, then the whole of Italy was saved. There is no military man who is ignorant that that great city, which in the midst of her impregnable *lagunes* could never have fallen but by an act of political suicide, possesses the

right of a position, of which Genoa, which within her triple line of defence could maintain an entire army, holds the left; while the higher Alps, stretching along the whole of the frontier with their icy ridges, form a natural rampart against the incursions of barbarians. "Yes," cried the count, in a fit of patriotic enthusiasm, "five millions of Italians from the left bank of the Po, incited and exasperated by oppression, may still brave the descendants of the Huns and of the Goths.

"But in the mean time no time is to be lost," he went on: "the Austrians are in full march: it will no longer be time to assume the defensive, if you once allow them to conquer and subjugate the lively and irascible but energetic population of the middle provinces, whose hearts and whose courage a voluptuous climate has softened and enervated."

Such was his language to his associates; and next day he set out in order to hasten the explosion of the insurrectional movement that was preparing in Piedmont, where he knew the fermentation to be extreme. The intention manifested by Austria to employ her influence in the other cabinets, and, if need required, to place Naples by force under the yoke of despotism, had roused against that power the anger of every friend of national independence; but when the stipulations which the emperor imposed on the kings of Sardinia and of the Two Sicilies not to grant any concession to their subjects, were made known, the exasperation surpassed all bounds. Here was in fact an Austrian monarch seeking to rivet the chains of Italy, while at the same time he treated her princes as his vassals. Thus every man regarded him as a personal enemy, who was to be op-

posed to the death. In order to execute so hazardous a resolution, the whole disposable power of the people was inadequate, and the concurrence of the existing government was therefore indispensable; yet, as it was foreseen that the monarch who held it would not voluntarily consent to adopt hostile measures against his ancient ally, it was determined to proceed without his consent; and the insurrection was in consequence decided. The rising would have been universal if they had complied with the wishes of the ardent reformers, who were anxious for the triumph of pure democracy, and were not deterred by a similar attempt to that which had cost France, and without the slightest advantage, so many tears and so much blood.

Happily this party was the less numerous that the king was generally beloved and re-

spected, and the immense majority of his subjects in consequence were not unwilling to continue his power under restrictions analogous to those that had been adopted in other states. Of the constitutions to which they looked for a model, that of the English had in its favour the advantage of long and glorious experience; but the young officers who had entered into the conspiracy, and who, being masters of the soldiers, were masters also of every decision that was come to, preferred the work of the Spanish army, whose conduct they imitated, to any thing in the nature of mere political combination. Besides, that constitution had been adopted at Naples; and a conformity in that respect appeared likely to contribute to the success of the Italian federation. The consequence was, that the liberals, who desired a pure republic, refused to expose themselves to

the caprice of a parcel of inconsiderate youths, as they were well aware how precarious an affair representative monarchy must be when not strengthened by its indispensable prop, a chamber of peers.

While Cesia was traversing the Roman states and Tuscany, on his route to Turin, the insurrection burst simultaneously forth in various points of the Sardinian territory. On arriving at Alexandria, he saw floating above the formidable ramparts of that citadel, before which so many thousands have perished, the tri-coloured flag of green, red, and blue, the ancient colours of the kingdom of Italy, and the index of the object at which the insurgents aimed. The count halted but a few hours, for the purpose of conferring with the officers of the revolted garrison, and then pursued his route to the capital; in which, and not in the

provinces, the fate of states is ordinarily decided. The position of Piedmont, at this critical moment, was extremely singular; nor does History, in all the strange events that she has handed down, present any example precisely analogous. Piedmont had no less than four distinct supreme authorities; between which it was no easy task to select one to whom obedience was a lawful service. The king, Victor Emanuel, who was firm enough to oppose the demands of the insurgents, and too honourable a man not to refuse what he was determined not to grant, yet at the same time without sufficient resolution to embark in a struggle, the issues of which were doubtful, and could not fail to be attended with bloodshed, had abdicated, and in the absence of the natural successor to his throne, had delegated his powers to that prince who, in default of his

brother and himself, was to mount the throne. The Prince of Genoa, the heir-presumptive in question, had not accepted of the succession thus proffered to him, yet had he published a proclamation which in its form had all the authority of a royal decree. At the same time, there was a junta nominated, or rather called imperatively forth, by the voice of the nation, which the power that appointed them compelled the regent to recognise, and which in fact exercised all the functions of the executive. Here were at the same moment two kings, a regent, and a popular committee. It is almost unnecessary to ask what could spring out of such a chaos.

The *dénouement* was not slow in its approach. The wonderful times in which we live, and which are so fertile in extraordinary events, present perhaps no picture more singular than

the submissive apathy of the existing generation to the dominion of the bayonet. In the space of seven years, we mean from 1815 to 1821, no less than four nations had given a memorable example of this scandalous weakness; had allowed those troops that were enrolled and paid to defend the laws as well as the country, to overturn the government, and to do so as unceremoniously as the pretorian bands of old, and in more modern times the Strelitz were wont to do, when deposing an emperor or a czar. Such had been the way in which France, Spain, Naples, and Piedmont, had submitted to be invaded, so to say, and conquered by their own soldiers.

It is true that many individuals who did not belong to the army took an active part in those revolutions, and endeavoured to give them a national colour by holding them forth as the

work of the people. But only let us sum up their numbers, instead of listening to their declamations, and we shall find on the one side millions indifferent or opposed to these schemes; and on the other a few hundreds of students, lawyers, men of letters, and scions of nobility, high in place, or ambitious of being so. Such is the way in which, in the great dramas that are exhibited on the stage of the world, the people are represented. It must be allowed that those who are deceived by it go to the contemplation as they do to that of other plays, with their minds previously made up to be so.

The military insurrection of Piedmont found as few supporters in the nation at large as the soldiers of other countries had; but there was this notable peculiarity in the Sardinian army, that the officers, though quite unanimous in

their resolutions to defend the independence of their country when threatened by Austria, were wholly divided when called on to adopt those extreme measures which circumstances imperiously demanded of them. While some were of opinion that the safety of the country called on them to silence every scruple; many, and in this latter number were all those who had grown old in the army, looked on a revolt against the prince whom they had sworn to defend as a crime which no pretext of public utility could excuse; it was, they argued, as inconsistent with honour, as with their oaths. Such were the sentiments of the governors of provinces, and in general of all the officers of high rank; and by their means many of the garrisons were kept steady to their duty: nay, even in Turin itself, while the citadel was in the hands of the insurgents, the royal carabi-

neers, the household guards, and several other corps, remained steadfast in their loyalty. Affairs were in this perplexing condition when Cesia arrived at Turin. Santa Rosa had just been nominated minister of war; he was one of the most ardent of the revolutionary party, the fellow-countryman of Cesia, and the friend of his youth; like him he was a man of distinguished understanding, a warm friend of freedom, and bold even to rashness. He had given a proof of this in an order of the day just published, in which he forbade the army to obey the proclamation of Charles Felix, whose actions, so long as he remained at Modena in an enemy's territory, could not be deemed free, and in which also he promised them the support of France and of Lombardy; a bold promise, but not so wholly unfounded as it appeared. His connexion with

the malcontents in the east of France had indeed informed him that a grand movement was in contemplation, which could not fail to promote the revolutionary cause; and, in fact, on the 20th of March, a day of fatal recollections, an insurrection did take place at Grenoble; which, had not the resident authorities shown as much firmness as the soldiers of the garrison, who boldly routed the rebels, showed courage, the former would unquestionably have got possession of the town, and of its castle also. In the Milanese the minds of the public were not less agitated; and so strongly alarmed were the imperial family there, that preparations had actually been made for the departure of the vice-queen; and several bands of federalists and of students of the university of Pavia crossed the Tesino, notwithstanding her vigilance, and proceeded to offer their services

to the Piedmontese junta. These young men assumed the pompous designation of the " Legion of Minerva;" a goddess who, in their classical enthusiasm they were wont to say, presided equally over the arts, over learning, and arms.

Their offers were accepted; they received arms; and Santa Rosa called on his friend Cesia to take the command of a troop utterly unskilled in war, but full of patriotic ardour. The count did justice to their zeal, and he fully participated in their sentiments; but he would have preferred a command of veteran soldiers, well convinced that nothing can compensate for the absence of discipline and that firmness of heart, which experience and the habit of encountering danger can alone bestow: he accepted, however, the charge, from his devotion to the cause.

It was at this period that the junta, in determining to assume the offensive, formed out of all the troops that obeyed their orders a *corps d'armée*, for the purpose of opposing the governor of Novara; who, recognising no other master than Charles Felix, threatened to march upon Turin. It was the more necessary to anticipate the governor's movements, because the news of the check sustained by the Neapolitans under Pepe at Rieti had in a very singular degree raised the courage of the Austrians in the Milanese, and throughout all the districts where revolutionary principles prevailed.

When the insurgent forces were mustered, they amounted to about seven thousand men of every description; but their commanders, calculating confidently on the defection of the royalists, with many of whose officers they were

secretly in treaty, advanced boldly to the walls of Novara. On the 8th of April, in the morning, they drew up within cannon-shot of the ramparts of that town, and were preparing for a vigorous attack, when they were anticipated by a sally of the garrison. At the same moment the corps of Bubna, which had passed the Tesino during the night, unexpectedly showed themselves on the left of the Piedmontese, which they threatened to turn. A retreat was in consequence ordered, and was conducted for some time in perfect order ; but the squadron of dragoons of the queen, which covered the rear, having been driven in by a party of Austrian hussars, the infantry hastily threw down their arms, and the whole immediately disbanding, returned to their homes, and never after dreamed of rejoining their colours. The officers, thus abandoned, took flight in various direc-

tions; some took shipping at Genoa—some passed into Spain—some passed the Alps, and sought shelter in Switzerland; and others sought refuge in France; and in the interim the capital, by its representatives, the senate, sent the keys of the city to the Count de la Tour, the Monk of this revolution. Their example was followed by the submission of the whole kingdom.

So terminated the remarkable episode of the conspiracy of 1821, the Piedmontese insurrection; it fell by a single blow. Had the army been unanimous, the moment was so extremely opportune, that they might not only have delivered the whole of Italy, and kept the Germans for many a year beyond the Alps; but the discord that had insinuated itself into their ranks deprived them of all power and conse-

quence; the great political quarrel of a nation degenerated into a military brawl; and the insurgents, to use a quaint observation of Mirabeau's, did not obtain even the sorry honours of a civil war. De la Cesia commanded the band of youthful federalists in the unhappy affair which we have briefly described; he conducted himself with his accustomed bravery, but fortune was as unkind to him under the walls of Novara as she had been on the plains of Prussia; he had been wounded while fighting at the head of the students of Berlin, and he was now wounded a second time, and much more severely, while attempting to rally the followers of Minerva, whom a charge of cavalry had broken. He was carried off the field, where he had been left for dead, by one of the suttlers; and when he recovered his senses, he

saw no other means of safety than a journey to the neutral and peaceful territory of Switzerland. With great labour and difficulty he succeeded in gaining the grand route of the Simplon above Sesto Calenda, at the place where it begins to run along the Lago Maggiore; but he had not proceeded farther than Arona when excessive fatigue opened his wound again, and he found it impossible to go farther. Happily he found at the foot of the colossus erected to San Carlo Borromeo a fishing-boat, by which he was conveyed to the Austrian port of Laveno. He was, indeed, not more secure there than while under the power of Sardinia; but he entertained hopes of finding an asylum with the Marquis of Varèze, a noble Comoese, and his kinsman, whose country-house was in the neighbourhood of the port; nor was he

deceived. The marquis readily received him; and to his generous care Cesia probably owed his life, though it made him lose his happiness for ever.

CHAPTER X.

THE Marquis Varèze was an old nobleman, who, like many of his countrymen, had never held office, either civil or military. For thirty years his leisure had been consecrated to study, and chiefly to scientific researches into the antiquities of his native town. His literary labours had not been altogether unsuccessful; it was known at Como that he had published two folio dissertations, of local interest, indeed, but not the less esteemed on that account by

the erudite of the province. The French revolution had troubled the peaceful current of his life; nevertheless, from his naturally circumspect and timid character, the marquis had contrived to avoid taking any part in the events that had agitated Italy for the previous twenty years; during the course of which, the principal object of his policy was to escape as much as possible from the heavy impositions which the successive governments and the different invading armies had laid on the more wealthy proprietors. At the establishment of the Cisalpine republic, he lamented the loss of his title; but he was much more sensibly affected in witnessing the pitiless destruction of the armorial bearings that decorated the entrance to his baronial palace. Under the imperial government of France his vanity was somewhat consoled, for the nobility began then to recover a

portion of their consequence: but the interminable succession of wars entered upon by Napoleon deprived them of all security. After Napoleon's fall, he could, it is true, promise to himself the enjoyment of a long peace; but, on the other hand, the taxes were becoming daily more difficult of payment, because the money went regularly to Vienna, and it never returned to enrich the country whence it was drawn. But this common grief was small compared with the continual irritation felt by the Lombards, a polished and ceremonious people, from the roughness of the Austrian *employés*, whose gross and rude manners shocked the delicacy of the nobility, accustomed to the obsequious respect of their fellow-countrymen, and to the politeness of the agents of the old government. Thus, when the Neapolitan revolution broke out, every one put up prayers

for its success; but when Piedmont also rose, not a doubt was entertained that the moment of acquiring an independence so ardently desired had come; and this was the more probable, since the Austrian garrisons, as we have before observed, had been inconsiderately diminished.

Secret associations were formed in every quarter, with a view to co-operate in the great work. The most zealous of the committee of Como was an intimate friend of the marquis, an active and energetic individual, who exercised a powerful and habitual influence over him: yet even he, by all his pressing entreaties, could not prevail on the old man, though he sympathised with their sentiments, to join the conspirators. All that he could obtain, and that was on the express condition that the donor should not be named, was a considerable sum of money destined to pay the

first levies. The supply was not ample enough, and funds were still wanting. Such a case happens not unfrequently, in similar circumstances, even in rich countries; for men are always more ready to venture their heads than to hazard their purses. Their ill-timed parsimony in the present instance, joined to the pusillanimity of some of the heads of the conspiracy, made the revolutionists lose much precious time; and the viceregal archduke, who had already taken measures for abandoning his capital, recovered his courage: the Piedmontese insurrection was put down, and the opportunity was lost to the Lombards for ever.

When the Marquis of Varèze first heard of the defeat at Novara, he was along with his daughter, a young girl of eighteen years of age, of rare merit and exquisite beauty, at Blevio, at a country-house situated on the

banks of the Lake of Como. He perceived at once that the submission of the Piedmontese had decided the fate of Lombardy, and he bitterly repented having yielded to the entreaties of his friend. Already he beheld himself denounced, pursued, condemned, as guilty of high-treason against the emperor. It was while he was a prey to these alarms that he received the billet of Count de la Cesia; and his first movement was to refuse the asylum he requested.

"Read that letter, Thomasine," said he to his daughter, "and judge whether, under my circumstances, I should receive under my roof one of the leaders of the insurgents; people in that case would not scruple to believe that I had been leagued with them."

"Heaven will not permit so benevolent an action to be turned to your prejudice," replied

the young lady; "and were it even so, how could you abandon your own kinsman, and the son of your best friend?"

"True, true," said the marquis, heaving a deep sigh, "it is a matter of duty, as you say, and I must perform it; but if I do receive him here, I foresee the consequences will be terrible."

"Why those melancholy forebodings?" said his daughter, taking affectionately the old man's hand: "how can it be made out a crime to succour a poor wounded man? Common charity calls on us to do as much; and are they not Christians who would reproach us with the performance of so meritorious an act?"

The character of the marquis was feeble and timorous, but he was a humane and good man; and his generous feelings thus appealed to by the exhortations of his daughter, he determined to

receive the count; and he sought at the same time to persuade himself that there was less danger in doing so than he had at first imagined. He immediately despatched a confidential messenger with orders to conduct La Cesia to the *château* with all the care that his condition required. When the servant arrived at Laveno, he found the condition of the young count highly alarming: the heats, which in that climate come on early, had so affected his wounds, that already had gangrenous spots appeared in the cut in his thigh, and the surgeon who dressed it declared that it would require several weeks of absolute repose before he would be able to walk; he even added, that he would in all probability be a cripple for life. Notwithstanding these terrible prognostics, La Cesia having announced his determination to remain no longer in the inn where he had

alighted, he was placed on a litter, and in the evening of the next day he arrived at the palace of the Marquis Varèze. He did not arrive a moment too soon: the excessive fatigue he had undergone, joined to great anxiety of mind and much bodily pain, had rendered his illness very serious; and on the night of his arrival he was seized with a fever of a very violent nature. The first attack was severe, and the patient soon became delirious under its continued influence. On beholding these alarming symptoms, all the other fears of the marquis were absorbed in the danger of his youthful kinsman; he sent express for the most able surgeon that was to be found in the district: he placed himself by the couch of the patient, which, until the crisis was past, he seldom quitted; and his amiable daughter was not less assiduous in her attentions. Thomasine had been reared

in the habit of doing good by a virtuous and charitable mother; and her attentions towards the sick had in them that delicacy and continuousness of which only women have the secret. It seemed, however, as if the disorder were not destined to yield either to attendance or medicine; and on the fifth day it assumed so alarming an aspect, that it was thought prudent to call in the consolations of religion to the sufferer. The count was now insensible, exhibiting hardly a sign of life; and as fears were entertained lest he should expire during the night, the priest and Thomasine spent it in prayer, while the marquis, who was tormented by the gout, retired to his chamber. Towards morning a favourable crisis appeared; and after some convulsive shiverings, La Cesia uttered a deep sigh and sat up in his couch: the strength of his constitution had triumphed

over his malady. On opening his eyes, he cast them in wonder over the large and unknown apartment in which he found himself, and beheld by the feeble light of a lamp that burned below it a young female kneeling before an image of the Virgin, her hands clasped together, and her looks raised to heaven, in the attitude of fervent prayer. Seated near her in an old-fashioned elbow-chair was a venerable monk attentively perusing his breviary, while the youthful chorister that accompanied the holy man slept soundly and calmly with his head resting against the bed. La Cesia was endeavouring, but in vain, in his confused recollections, to discover some connexion between these various objects and the events of the few previous days; (for there remained on his mind no very distinct traces of any thing that had happened, save the passages of the battle

of Novara and its fatal consequences, which the pain of his wound sufficiently kept him from forgetting,) when Thomasine perceived the happy change that had taken place, and, turning to the priest, hastily exclaimed—

"See, father, he lives—he recovers—Heaven has heard our vows!"

There was in Thomasine's voice that inexpressible sweetness which moves and charms the hearts of the coldest; and the young count, it may be supposed, did not hear it without emotion.

"Consoling angel!" exclaimed Cesia: "thou that prayest for my welfare, whence comes that lively interest that thou deignest to take in my welfare?"

A slight blush overspread the cheeks of the young maiden as she replied to this exclamation. "You are unwell," said she; "you are my

kinsman; and are we not all of the same great family? But you must be calm; the slightest emotion may prove fatal to you. I am going to call my father, who will be most happy to find you restored to life."

At these words she left her chamber; and the count collecting his scattered senses succeeded at length in recollecting the circumstances that had conducted him to the *château* of the Marquis Varèze.

The fever left him that day, and did not return; but the wound in his leg was so deep that it kept him for several weeks confined to a sofa. The marquis meanwhile continued to lavish his attentions on him; but they were no longer paid from a sentiment of humanity merely, he had conceived a real affection for his young guest, in whom he perceived a highly-cultivated and acute understanding,

combined with sentiments worthy of his exalted birth. The chamber of the invalid had been turned into the parlour of the *château*, and thither Thomasine accompanied her father in his visits to his youthful friend. Cesia, who at first had been struck by her beauty, had now an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the qualities of her mind, and of perceiving that they were not inferior to her personal charms. He soon discovered also that her understanding had been carefully cultivated. This advantage she owed to her excellent mother, a woman of distinguished merit, who had received her education in France, and who had filled up the leisure of a country life by bestowing a solid, and at the same time a varied education on her daughter. In the midst of the gay simplicity natural to her years, it was not indeed difficult to perceive the marks

of superior reason; and her intelligent glances, yet more than her words, served to display the extent of her information. The marked features of her character were candour and goodness, united to that benevolence of feeling which leads as naturally to sympathise with the sorrows as with the happiness of those around. On the heart of La Cesia so happy a union of a kind disposition with a person of exquisite beauty made a lively and a deep impression. Never indeed had he experienced any thing similar to the delight that he felt when she was by. The happiness of gazing on her, of listening to her voice, seemed to absorb his entire existence; he forgot freedom, the cause of his country, the mighty interests of a whole life; he not only forgot them, but he was inclined to wonder how they had ever seemed worthy of his thoughts.

He could not help observing, meanwhile, that his presence at Blevio caused the marquis great uneasiness, especially after his name had appeared in the list of the proscription drawn up by the Piedmontese government, and published in the official gazette of Turin.

"Nothing can be kept secret for ever," said the terrified old nobleman to him one day: "we are here surrounded by spies and informers; and if you are denounced, I have no means of saving you. Set out then the moment you can travel, even though it should cost you some exertion. The territory of Switzerland is at no great distance: I shall give you a confidential guide, who will conduct you by the mountain-road as far as Mendrisio; or what is still better, we shall get an escort of smugglers for you, who for a very small recompense will see you safely beyond the frontiers."

To this it was impossible to offer any objections; and impelled by a feeling of delicacy, even more than by any prudential motives, Cesia determined to quit, as soon as he possibly could, a host whom he was anxious not to compromise. He felt, however, the deepest regret at quitting Thomasine.

"Were I," said he to himself, "but certain of her love, then absence would bring with it less suffering; but to part while in doubt, is insupportable." He determined, therefore, to declare his affection; and the very next day an opportunity of doing so presented itself.

About two leagues from Blevio, at an ancient rural seat well known to travellers by the name of Pliny's Villa, there had been recently discovered an inscription respecting the famous intermitting fountain, the description of the singular phenomena exhibited by which, given

with such exactitude by the Roman naturalist, has come down to our times. The Marquis Varèze, who was a great amateur of antiquities, was desirous to copy this inscription, and he invited his young friend to accompany him. "The journey," said the old man, "will not fatigue you; for you can remain in the boat with my daughter, who has been anxious for a long time to take a sketch of that interesting building, and you can assist her with your advice." The count accepted this invitation with pleasure; and that same evening they embarked in one of those handsome shallops which are used by the residents on the banks of the lakes for the purposes of mutual communication. There is no road near the beach. The terraced gardens, or, where cultivation is impossible, the peaked rocks come down to the very water's-edge, and

therefore every summer residence has its boats, with their little harbour to shelter them in blowing weather, and their green-painted boat-house in which to lay them up. Two rowers conduct these little barks, one in the bow and another in the stern; and these boatmen, who are robust, well-made fellows, standing erect, after the fashion of the Venetian gondoliers, bend on their long oars, and handle them with as much vigour as skill. They use no helm, and they traverse the smooth surface of the limpid lake with extraordinary rapidity. When the wind is favourable they make use of a narrow sail, which is hoisted on a mast that can be set up or taken down at pleasure. A table occupies the centre of the boat, round which are placed suitable seats; while an elegant awning, furnished with curtains, protects the passengers from the heat of the sun.

Thomasine had carried with her her *porte-feuille* and her pencils; she had also taken her guitar, for she knew that her father was fond of hearing the sweet tones of her voice. We cannot say that he desired it for the purpose of diverting the listlessness of the voyage, for there is none that affords more pleasure and variety than a sail on the Lake of Como. It does not indeed present the imposing aspect of the Lake of Geneva, where we gaze at once on its vast extent, the smiling knolls that circle round its flowing verge, and the sublimity of the Alps, which form the frame-work of that splendid picture: neither does Como, like the Lago Maggiore, present to us those lovely islets, so famous for their singular palaces and enchanting gardens; but it has beauties, notwithstanding, that are peculiarly its own. At the first view it is impossible to judge of its

real extent, because the hills round it, running forward into the lake like so many headlands, form bays that appear to have no connexion one with another; but this arrangement, which diminishes the grandeur of the view, is more than amply compensated by the variety of scenery that is discoverable at every turn.

The principal of these bays is so surrounded by princely dwellings and country-houses, that its banks have the appearance of the mingled mass of gardens and buildings, that indicates the suburbs of some wealthy and populous city; but once past the headland, and the appearance of the lake has quite changed its character; the gardens have disappeared, or at least they are no longer continuous, and the whole scene bears a rural aspect. On the shore the hills, though precipitous, are clothed with a

verdure of never-failing freshness. The naked rock is only seen on the brink of the lake; and even there the wild fig-trees, with their green shining leaves, and numerous other trees and shrubs, spring forth from every cliff and crevice. The summit of the hills is covered with forest timber; of which, here and there, isolated clumps make their appearance on the pasture grounds.

On the opposite shore, up the slopes that face the sun, are to be found the richest productions of the temperate zone; the olive, the vine, the almond-tree, even the citron thrives there, and finds a shelter in the rocks on which it reclines as upon an immense espalier. Nothing can exceed the high cultivation of this part; every where the eye is filled with the signs of easy abundance, and amply remunerated industry: fruit-trees of all kinds spread along

the walls of the vine-dresser's cottage, and clusters of grapes are seen trailing on its roof; while half-way up the hills are seen the cellars and press-houses of the proprietor, which serve not only for the purposes of manufacture, but are nicely decorated and painted in lively colours: they furnish the promenader with the most delightful prospects; and there are held the festivals during the vintage.

Farther towards the east, at the bottom of an arm of the lake, and sheltered from the ardour of the burning sun, are found the most agreeable of all those habitations that border on the lake, we mean the hamlet of Torno, composed entirely of houses for summer residence, each large enough for the accommodation of a family and of two or three friends. These residences have usually five windows in front: they have two floors, with a rusticated base-

ment: the roofs are flat, and the green Venetian blinds contrast very prettily with the dazzling white of the stuccoed walls. All these houses have landing-places, which lead to a terrace, raised about twenty feet above the surface of the lake. The little gardens, which are bounded by the waters in front, and by the rapid ascent of the hill in the rear, seldom contain any thing but flowers; and the walks of the inhabitants are limited to some narrow pathways, that serpentinise among the brushwood. Two of these houses, that greatly exceed the rest in size and in the profusion of their ornaments, were pointed out to the attention of our voyagers. The handsomest was the Villa Belvidere; whose garden, which is laid out in the English fashion, is bounded on the edge of the lake by a narrow belt of turf, that winds about its elegant

margin. There, on a bank shaded by some large weeping willows, whose pendulous branches hung down to the very surface of the water, sat an old man, habited in oriental costume, with a young and beautiful person, apparently his daughter, by his side. He was the recent purchaser of the villa, a wealthy Greek merchant, who had prudently withdrawn his head and his fortune from the cruel troubles that wasted his unhappy country, and in this peaceful retreat calmly waited until the storm fell. There can be little doubt, that in selecting this abode, he was influenced by the resemblance that its features bore to the lovely scenery of the Bosphorus and of the Propontis, of whose praises we so often hear. Indeed, the sky of his native land could not be more serene, nor its waters more pure, nor its temperature more delightful; he could here enjoy, at the same

period of the spring, the tulips and narcissus, to which Constantinople has given her name; and here he could again hail his old compatriots, the pale olive, the sombre cypress, and the oriental plane. The dimensions of the lake also differed but little from that of the canal of the Euxine; and the height of the surrounding hills was nearly the same. It must be confessed that the little rustic church of Torno was not quite so picturesque as the towery mosque, with its airy minarets: yet the revered symbol of Christianity which crowned the former, proclaiming protection without distinction of belief to all mankind, and which assured to the exile that security which is the first of blessings, might well challenge comparison with the crescent that blazed above the latter—the safeguard of the ferocious Turk, and the signal of hatred and oppression to all beside.

On leaving the hamlet of Torno on the left hand, the lake turns abruptly towards the north, a direction which it preserves to the very foot of the Alps; and the prospect in this quarter is terminated by those mighty masses of heaped-up mountains. It is in front of this beautiful piece of water, in one of the bendings formed by its scooped-out shores, between a lovely cascade on the one hand and the famous intermitting well on the other, that the Villa Pliniana is situated. Of old, a mansion both of pleasure and of study, it was worthy of the rank and fortune of its owner; but all that time has now left is one long gallery raised but a short way above the lake, and destined apparently for enjoying the cool breeze. At one of the ends of this gallery is the muzzle of a colossal lion, which has served for an ornament to a fountain, the waters of which are now lost: the

sculpture of the head is very much admired. These ancient erections have been joined with considerable ingenuity to the modern buildings of a noble Comoese, the Marquis Camaris, who has constructed above the baths, of which some traces are still to be seen, several rooms of handsome proportions, and an elegant portico. The prospect that may be enjoyed from the latter excels any other that presents itself on the whole lake. The extent of the water here seems immense, and the surrounding framework is magnificent. In the extreme back-ground are seen the Rhetian Alps; and nearer the eye, numerous nameless mountains and hills of unequal heights and various hues serve to embellish the landscape; whilst the labours of men, which appear in the distance, harmonise perfectly with those of nature that surround them. Villages encircled by orchards,

picturesque spires, palaces of noblemen of splendid architecture, the elegant residences of the wealthy citizens; finally, woods and meadows with verdure of all shades, rocks, waterfalls, broken grounds, cultured fields whose fertile soil sends up the richest productions, the boat of the fisherman, the barge of the merchant, richly ornamented gondolas skimming, in every sense of the word, over the lightly undulating surface of the lake: all these objects form a combination so delightful, that the most extravagant imagination can ask for nothing more.

The sun was nearly set when the boat of the marquis reached the Villa Pliniana: he landed alone, while Thomasine directed the boat to be pushed off to a convenient distance for sketching that interesting monument, interesting both

from the beauty of its site, and from the recollections associated with it. Having stationed the shallop a little to the westward of the spot where her father had landed, she could command a side-view of the cascade which falls from a rock close to the house; and she could, at the same time, perceive through the arcade of the portico the ancient cypresses, whose lofty and tufted tops tower above the edifice. The point of view was happily chosen; but she was but little skilled in the art of perspective, and she was puzzled and displeased in consequence with her labours.

"How happens it," said she somewhat impatiently to La Cesia, who endeavoured to assist her with his advice, "that one can never render exactly even those objects that affect the imagination in the most lively manner?"

" It is not thus," replied he in an expressive tone, " where the heart is deeply affected; see here a proof of it."

While pronouncing these words, he hastily traced with the pencil a resemblance of his youthful relation.

The likeness was admirable.

" What!" exclaimed she, " this is my portrait!"

" Yes, 'tis yourself," replied the count, casting on Thomasine a passionate glance: " but keep the sketch; I need it not. Your image is here," added he, placing his hand on his heart; " the likeness here is a much more marked one, and it can never be effaced."

A deep blush overspread the cheeks of Thomasine: the pencil with which she had been drawing hung suspended in her trembling hand while the count went on—

"In declaring to you my sentiments at the moment that I am about to leave you, I ask you for nothing; I know I have no right to do so. I had gazed on you—I had admired your beauty; but now I know you, and I adore your mind. So many charms, so many perfections would affect the most insensible. If what I have now uttered excite not your anger, deign to tell me so; I shall carry with me that consolation, and my exile will be so much the less miserable."

"It would be impossible to continue my sketch," said Thomasine in a faltering voice; and rising up, she ordered the boatmen to row for the shore, and to enter the little harbour at the foot of the old gallery. While they were obeying her command, she leaned her head against the mast in silence. The count again addressed her in a despairing accent.

"What! not one word? Why, if I have offended you, if you have any aversion for me, not tell me so frankly? That is the only means, if any means are possible, to drive my fatal passion from me. Oh yes, for pity's sake, say that you hate me."

"I hate!" exclaimed Thomasine eagerly; "and begin to hate by hating you!—you, whom ——." She stopped, as if alarmed at what she had said, while large tears rolled over her blushing cheeks, and choking sighs oppressed her breathing. The count was transported; and he would have expressed his transport at her feet, had not the boat that moment touched the shore. Thomasine sprung from its bow with the rapidity of a bird, and ran forward to rejoin her father, saying to La Cesia as she left him—"If you should be induced to

sketch while waiting for us, you can finish mine; I shall retain yours."

The researches of the marquis were finished, and he embarked with his daughter; but the breeze was against them, and they were obliged, in order to regain Blevio, to stand over the lake opposite the Villa d'Este. In approaching that palace, which was at that time inhabited by the Queen of England, they heard a loud sound of instruments; and, by-and-bye, two boats filled with musicians put off, preceded by a shallop richly gilded, and tricked out with flags more richly than tastefully; at the stern of which, on a raised seat, sat Caroline, like another Cleopatra; and, like Cleopatra also, she sat beside her lover. That lover was indeed neither a Cæsar nor an Antony, but a person of low rank, formerly one of her domestics; vulgar

in features as low in birth, and distinguished for nothing but a tall and athletic form. Thick whiskers covered the half of his face; and a coat decorated with some order or other, purchased with a small sum of money, but dearly purchased at the same time, had been substituted for his courier's jacket. His hand rested with impudent familiarity on the arm of his mistress. Below them sat three of his female relations, women of course of the lowest rank in society, who held the place of maids of honour to the wife of one of the most powerful sovereigns in the world.

In passing the barge of the queen, the marquis and his daughter arose and saluted her respectfully. It was not, however, her person so much as her rank that attracted their homage, which accused the object it was meant to honour. Even the boatmen of their shallop,

unrestrained by their example, could not be kept from joking in insulting terms, sufficiently loud for the princess's ear, on the scandalous nature of her amours: while Caroline blushed more from anger than from shame. As to La Cesia, he turned his eyes from a spectacle which, in the existing state of his feelings, he could not behold without indignation. He experienced, in fact, a sort of humiliation in beholding confounded under one common denomination, the basest and most degrading passions of human nature, the grossest pleasures, the lowest debaucheries, and that lively and delicate sentiment which inspires nothing but generous thoughts—that pure and virtuous love which at once exalts and ennobles every faculty of the soul.

CHAPTER XI.

From the period of his visit to the Villa Pliniana, La Cesia's recovery was rapid, his wound closed, and his strength was visibly increasing every hour. Gratified affection (and love is ever gratified when it has hope to feed on) is the best of all physicians. The marquis, without penetrating the cause of this favourable change, viewed with satisfaction the approach of the moment that he was to be rid of the embarrassment of a guest, whose presence,

though he was far from regretting that he had received him into his family, had nevertheless occasioned him the most lively uneasiness. As for the count, he experienced a sentiment not altogether opposite: that cure, whose slowness formerly caused him so much impatience, now appeared too hasty, insomuch as it took from him every excuse for prolonging his stay with her to whom he was so warmly attached. Dared he, while he obeyed the call of a rigorous duty, and removed himself from her presence—dared he hope that the impression he had produced in the heart of Thomasine was sufficiently deep not to be effaced by his absence? All that he knew was, that she had not seemed to take offence at his declaration of his love; but there was a long interval between such a state of mind in his mistress, and that feeling in which he wished her to participate, and without

which he conceived it impossible for him to endure existence. In this perplexity he sought to renew the conversation that had been begun in the boat; but, though they met every day, so great was her care to avoid any such an opportunity, that he found it impossible. Scarce could he even catch a glance of her eye; for the moment that he looked towards her, her long and silken lashes were drawn downward, and a slight carnation passed over her cheek. Assuredly these were not symptoms of indifference, but they spoke a degree of reserve but ill calculated to satisfy a passionate lover. The truth is, that Thomasine had been as much affected as surprised on hearing the declaration of Cesia. Up to that moment she had never asked of her own heart, whether the interest that she took in the young man's fate had any thing in it more tender than the benevolent commise-

ration that she felt for every one that partook of her cares. She was pleased with his society; she thought him much more amiable than any other man she had seen; but in the simplicity of her heart, she was utterly ignorant how very dear he was to her, until the moment when his unexpected declaration unveiled the secret of her bosom to herself. Though astonished and alarmed even at the strength of the sentiments she entertained, she sought not however to combat them, for she saw nothing blamable in their indulgence: yet by an instinctive feeling of modesty, inseparable from innocence, she endeavoured to hide from every eye her mental agitation, and the confusion that it caused her. It had, however, produced so great a change in the whole of her appearance, that any one with the slightest attention might have discovered its cause. Her gaiety now, much less

than before, no longer resembled the liveliness of childhood; her look was much more touching: the expression of her countenance, which no shade had previously clouded, was become pensive, and occasionally absent; and not unfrequently involuntary sighs escaped from her bosom. With her father her manners were more caressing than usual: she embraced the little orphans, towards whom she acted as mother, more tenderly; and when prostrated at the altar, her prayers were more fervent. When La Cesia was sick, she had prayed for him; now that his health was no longer the subject of uneasiness, his name was ever recurring to her thoughts, and influenced her to beg of Heaven to preserve and to prosper him.

In spite of all these marks, the marquis saw not what was passing in the heart of his daughter; for of all eyes, the least acute are

those of fathers and husbands; but he saw with pleasure that the count would be soon in a condition to endure the fatigue of the journey necessary for their mutual safety; and he was already occupied in preparations for that purpose, when one of those Lombard pedlars that pass the Rhetian Alps twice every year for the purpose of carrying to France and Switzerland barometers, cages, and other small wares, happened to arrive at the palace of Blevio. These active and intelligent fellows conduct their petty traffic with such rigid economy, that it is not rare to see them, after a few years, in a condition to build a convenient house, and plant a handsome orchard on the banks of their native lake. The one to which we are now alluding was son to an inhabitant of Torno, who rented some fields belonging to the marquis. He asked to speak with his superior in

private, and when he was alone with him, he told him that he had just arrived from Paris, and that he had undertaken to deliver a sum of money and a letter to the young officer that was concealed in his house. The marquis, alarmed at a secret of so much importance being divulged, and thus confided to a person whose sentiments were unknown, was at first tempted to deny every thing; but he was soon reassured by the appearance of the young man, whose family were in some measure dependent on him, and he himself conducted him to the count, who had not the slightest expectation of such a communication.

The subject of it we may describe in a very few words. The recent events in Piedmont, and the destruction, after so feeble a struggle, of the Neapolitan revolution, which was, it was generally affirmed, to arouse the whole of Italy,

had completely disconcerted the bands of conspirators who, from one end of Europe to the other, were zealously labouring, although from different motives, to overthrow all thrones, and to open again a way for universal revolution. The Countess Gradiska partook of their vexation; but as she had placed but little hope in a rash enterprise conducted by persons whose incapacity she well knew, she was not astonished at the result. She endeavoured, therefore, to support the sunken courage of her companions by pointing to Spain, where the flame of insurrection burnt daily brighter; whilst in France, where the fate of Europe was ultimately to be decided, the cause was daily acquiring fresh proselytes.

In the mean time, the most lively uneasiness agitated the breast of that lady, whose energy of character raised her so much above her sex,

and we may say above the age in which she lived. She was aware that her youthful friend had served in the ranks of the Piedmontese insurgents, and she dreaded lest his ungovernable courage should have proved fatal to him in the disastrous rencontre at Novara. Three weeks elapsed before her correspondents in Switzerland and Italy were able to give her the information respecting his fate which she had requested. At length she discovered by one of the emissaries of the Bonaparte family, which had never ceased to keep up active communications with the discontented party in France and in Italy, that La Cesia had been grievously wounded, but that he had not fallen into the hands of the victors, because he had been seen some days after the battle in the neighbourhood of the Lago Maggiore. The next courier informed her that he had found an

asylum in the house of the Marquis Varèze, and she instantly adopted measures for sending him what assistance his condition might require. After some inquiries, a man from the Lake of Como, who had successfully acquitted himself of several similar commissions, was pointed out to the countess. To him she delivered a hundred napoleons, a letter of credit on a banker at Geneva, and a passport for the count, under the name of Noirval. This document was regularly drawn up with all the stamps and signatures necessary; and for the greater security, she had the precaution to get it *vised* by the ambassadors of Austria and of Sardinia; those very governments by which the person to whom their representatives thus unwittingly granted safety and protection, had been proscribed; an additional proof, if any were wanting, that the invention of passports,

which seems so marvellous in the eyes of small-witted statesmen, while it is extremely troublesome to the peaceful traveller, has yet the advantage of serving occasionally the purposes of the treasonable conspirator. In her letter which accompanied the remittance, the countess pressed her friend to come to Paris. "This capital," said the billet, "will very speedily be the theatre of mighty events; and a character worthy of your courage and of your talents has been set apart for you."

La Cesia was sensibly affected by the interest in his welfare manifested by his friend, but his views were no longer what they had been; one single idea had possessed itself of the whole faculties of his soul, and though still faithful to the oaths that he had sworn to his confederates, he was no longer capable of fulfilling them. Anxious, hesitating, and uncertain, as

to what resolution he should adopt, he at length finished by yielding to the imperious duty that called him to quit Blevio; although he could not prevail on himself to remove to a distance from it. His affection, however, for one to whom he had given the title of sister, did not allow him to keep that determination concealed from her; and he felt, besides, the want of some friendly bosom, into which he could pour the confession of those sentiments which wholly filled his heart.

The letter that he wrote on this occasion to the countess, expresses much better than we could do the situation in which this impassioned and impetuous young man then was. It ran thus:—

To the Countess Stanislas Gradiska.

Blevio, May, 1821.

You have discharged towards me, my dear sister, all the duties of friendship, with an ingenuity of zeal, the secret of which none but women know. It must be allowed that you feel, and can display a more tender and more constant devotedness than we can; but in love, how superior are we to you! Would you contest the point? Is not the energy of our passions naturally and necessarily proportionate to our strength of mind and of character? I speak of that species of love of which I now experience the power. With such love the heart is wholly filled, the mind is exclusively occupied; it absorbs every faculty of the soul; every act of the understanding, or of the perception, is influenced by its power and devoted

to its uses; and, like a true tyrant, it refuses to its victim even the indulgence of his own thoughts.

Yet how utterly incomprehensible the cause that operates on mankind with such resistless force! Assuredly, if perfect beauty, united to every mental perfection, were sufficient to inspire an ardent passion, I should still be clinging to your feet; but you know that a single refusal, and that of the least offensive kind, was sufficient to quench the flame that burned, but consumed me not. I imagined that I loved you—I but admired you. Shall I tell you that the irresistible charms of her I now adore excuse the violence of the passion I feel? Certainly I might call her charms irresistible, were all eyes formed as mine are. Would you ask me if she possesses all the graces that captivate, all the wit that seduces, all the qualifications

that retain a lover's affections? Alas! I cannot answer the question. All that I know of this young maiden is, that candour is seated on her brow—that the smile of kindness plays round her lips—that heaven beams from her eyes: that to gaze on her is my supreme felicity—to think on her my only business. In such a state of mind, what do you look for from me? What would you confide to me? Speak, my sister, would it be prudent to intrust such high interests to such wavering hands? for I must confess to you, I no longer find in myself those faculties that to you appeared superior to those of other men, nor do I know whither they are fled. Yet, bewail me not, my dearest friend; the wanderings of my heart are of all things the most delightful; nor would I exchange the species of annihilation that I at present experience for all the glories that the world has to bestow.

Yet, if I be the prey of a vain illusion—if the prospect that now dazzles my sight is destined to be dissipated like an unreal phantasy!—but no, I believe it not—my life and my love must perish together. The trial will speedily be made. I am about to remove from her presence—I am quitting my adored—I shall see whether absence will destroy the spell that now holds me bound. If it be so, I swear, my sister, that I shall fly to you. Freedom, humanity, the cause of brave men, shall once more find in me their boldest defender. I shall willingly expiate with my blood the fault of having even for an instant abandoned them.

I. L. C.

P. S. I quit this to-morrow. Duty will not allow me to remain any longer here; it would be a betrayal of hospitality. I am going to

Switzerland, where I shall remain for some time. Come what will, you shall hear of my fate; friendship and gratitude equally attach me to you. Believe ever, that all that remains of me is yours.

CHAPTER XII.

La Cesia, as he had stated to the countess, left the Palace Varèze next day. He went first to Como, where his passport was regularly *vised,* as if he had just arrived from Paris; and the same night setting out for Lugano, he entered the Swiss territory without difficulty. Not wishing however to remove from the frontier, he resolved to pass the period of his probation on the heights that overlook the town of Mendrisio. To these hills, where the pasture

is good, the inhabitants of the canton of Tesino are in the habit of driving their herds during the summer months. The air is pure, and the grass tender and juicy: the milk is in consequence excellent; and the numerous Alpine plants diffuse a fragrance which is as healthy as it is agreeable. From the place where he took up his abode it was possible, by climbing one of the highest peaks, to see the south shore of the Lake of Como; he could even, when the sky was very clear, discover the hill at the foot of which Blevio was situated. This, it will be confessed, was not the way to forget Thomasine; but he had not the slightest desire to drive her cherished image from his heart. All that he anxiously sought to ascertain was, what effect absence would produce on those tumultuous feelings that had lately agitated his heart, not less wonderfully than inexplicably. The hut

in which he resided was a *châlet*, or summer shieling, sheltered on the north by the forest of Larges, that crowns the ridge of these hills; and his only company was a young shepherd and his two sisters, who were employed in collecting hay for their cattle during the winter, and in milking their cows and making cheese. La Cesia sometimes joined in those rural amusements; but for the most part he sat on the point of a rock that hung over a precipice in the neighbourhood, pondering in his mind over the various events of his past life.

That life had been but short, and yet how crowded with incidents! Travels to distant lands; two warlike campaigns, under opposing banners; political intrigues surrounded by perils of every description had consumed his youth. And what had been the upshot of all these troubles? What enjoyment had they

purchased for him? Nowhere did his memory repose with pleasure but on the brief space in the past, that had been devoted to the cultivation of literature. "And yet," exclaimed he to himself, "what do studies without end, learning never complete, what do all our meditations on objects inaccessible to our limited means, and which only terminate in plunging us in an abyss of doubt and darkness, contribute to the happiness of life? Woes me! the shepherd yonder, who is frolicking on the velvety turf with his two sisters, is he not as much conversant with the secret of happiness as I am? What an air of content they wear! what undisturbed gaiety they display! what wisdom in their want of thought! They care not for the reveries of philosophy or the combinations of crooked politics, whose fatal name they do not even know. They see no grounds of un-

easiness as I do, and those who are like me, in the decrees of a capricious despot, or his perverse agents, at a hundred leagues' distance from them. Every thing around you, simple indwellers of this delightful clime, is to you peaceful and smiling; the future is as bright as the past has been fortunate, and the happiness of the sires will be the common inheritance of innumerous generations of their sons! Good young man! down in the plain that stretches at our feet, or perhaps on the other side of the little hill from which the torrent separates us, I can in my fancy view the simple companion that fate has destined for thee, by whom the never-dying family of thy fathers is to be perpetuated, and who is to crown all thy wishes, by adding to thy enjoyments the blessings of a father."

While he pronounced these words, a tear of

pleasure coursed down his cheek, and he sunk in a profound reverie; but he did not remain in that state long. To this momentary calm his former troubled thoughts soon succeeded, and hastily starting up, he exclaimed, "What! do not I also aspire to happiness, and why should I not grasp it? Thomasine—she might be—she shall be mine! What mighty obstacle separates us? And if obstacles there be, are they insurmountable?" Hurried away by the feeling of the moment, he eagerly directed his steps through the brushwood and shingle towards that point of the horizon where were seen the heaped-up vapours that half concealed the summit of the hills, the base of which is washed by the Lake of Como. By-and-bye, falling in with an almost perpendicular mountain path, he followed its windings until they led him to the brink of the torrent; he was about to pass

over by the long and yielding plank that united the two banks, but the sun was now setting, and darkness was already creeping up the valley. It was necessary, therefore, to renounce for that day any attempt to approach the dwelling of Thomasine; and he again sought in sadness and thoughtfulness his rustic dwelling. The inmates were already sunk in deep slumber when the count arrived, and he took unheeded his place beside them on the heap of dry leaves that served for their common bed; for in these lofty regions, purity of manners remains intact like a treasure preserved in an unapproachable citadel. He reclined, but his mind was too much harassed by fears, desires, and uncertainties, to permit him to enjoy the sweets of sleep. "In ordinary times," mused he to himself, "nothing could have been more suitable than a union between our family and that of

the Marquis Varèze. My birth and my fortune entitle me to the hand of the highest dame in Lombardy; yet existing circumstances deprive me, at least for the present, of all these advantages. Proscribed by the Piedmontese government, which I wished to overthrow, my property there is in all probability even now seized by the government, and will hardly fail to be confiscated. On the other hand, Austria, which a community of danger unites in the closest ties to Sardinia, will not be more regardful of my possessions in the Milanese; but what say I? Is not my freedom, the most precious of all my possessions, already threatened? Yes; and is not a process of high-treason, among the least consequences of which would be an imprisonment in some old castle for years, the sad prospect of her that should consent to unite her destinies with mine? Perhaps, indeed,

time and reason, more than the boasted clemency of princes, may lead to some amelioration of those rigours; but I know the timid character of the father of Thomasine. His anxiety about his safety, which he indulges to pusillanimity, will lead him to oppose with all his power the proffer of a connexion which may render his political opinions yet more suspected than they at present are. Even though he believed that the happiness of his daughter was at stake, he would not sacrifice his ease to purchase it."

These were depressing thoughts, and they afflicted La Cesia, although they did not discourage him. His constitution was singularly made up, for he united to a vivacity that was often pushed to violence a tenaciousness of purpose the most persevering. Unhappily, no moral check had sufficient influence over him

to restrain from transgressing the limits of strict duty. As soon as his reason had convinced him that the marquis would refuse his consent, his only remaining consideration was to contrive means of dispensing with it. He was not yet so corrupted as not to seek to justify in his own eyes so culpable a wish. "Let her," said he, "but love me; let me be assured of that, it will suffice to impose on me the obligation for life of studying only her happiness. To bring misfortune upon her and upon myself out of regard to a vulgar prejudice, which holds out paternal jurisdiction as of divine origin, would be too great an act of folly. Like many others, the tyrannical power over his offspring vested by law in the parent is the bitter fruit of civilisation, and springs solely from that love of domineering which, arguing upon the requirements of childhood, would in-

definitely prolong dependence, and continue to subject to its thrall those who no longer require restraint nor counsel. Nature points out other rules more consonant to justice. Among animals, the tenderness of the mother, which is so warm, so devoted, and so constant, continues not a moment after the necessity for it has ceased; and when it departs, indifference the most perfect succeeds, and with it perfect equality. How falsely do men reason in similar cases! This old man is the absolute master of his daughter's destiny, and he is charged with her safety: yet, from his feebleness and timidity, he is utterly incapable of conducting himself in a moment of difficulty; and in such a moment would yet scruple, perhaps, to immolate her angel beauty to his own safety!"

Such was the sophistry that the headstrong

youth employed in defence of his unbridled passion. Yet his conscience from the bottom of a heart whose feelings were naturally just, and an understanding naturally acute, rejected such a process of reasoning; and they took what was the most obvious way to have their appeal listened to, by exciting uneasiness in his thoughts respecting the future condition of the beloved object. Determined as he was to carry off Thomasine from her father's house, he yet hesitated whither to bear her. Was he to take her to a foreign land? And if he did, what could he offer her there? In his regardlessness of his fortune, he had neglected to lay aside a sum sufficient for his maintenance, at least for a few years, in honourable ease; and he now cursed that contempt of money which had formerly been his boast: for how could he contemplate her whom he

held so dear, whom he deemed worthy of all the thrones in the universe, for whom he would have desired to heap up all the enjoyments that gold could buy, compelled to undergo for his sake the privations of poverty, the humiliations of distress? Tears of bitterness dropped from his eyes as he contemplated a picture that so deeply wounded his pride; and at the moment he was under the influence of these feelings, he was tempted for ever to renounce an attachment that presented so slender prospects of happiness. But the barbed arrow that had struck him had pierced his heart too deeply; his efforts to pluck it out were vain, and only served to prove that a passion so interwoven with his existence would only perish with it.

In such a frame of mind repose was impossible. La Cesia rose, and walked hastily back-

ward and forward in the neighbourhood of the little hut: day had not yet dawned on the valleys, but it is sooner perceived on the mountains. Already in the distance might be seen the snowy tops of the higher Alps, whose pale rose colour was soon to be changed into one of dazzling whiteness as the glimmering stars melted away by degrees before the nascent day. The horizon was clear, all but a few thin bluish mists that lingered on the side of the lower hills, and promised a fine day. Below the shieling, under the shelter of a frowning rock, and girt round by an inclosure formed of young fir-branches, arranged in lozenges, the herd of his host were quietly waiting to be led out to their pasture grounds; every thing around was still and silent; the birds slumbered in their nests, and the cool breeze of the morning breathed so gently on the leaves of the lofty trees that they

gave not even a murmur back; the only sound that struck the ear was the feeble trickle of a thread of water, which rustic industry had contrived to turn into some troughs of pine wood, so as to form an artificial watering-place for the cattle; the air was loaded with sweet and balsamic perfumes.

At this period of the day, at the moment of dawn, when refreshing slumber has restored to animals and man sufficient strength to recommence a course of motion and labour, the common destiny of all that breathes, something like a salutary crisis is commonly apparent. The herbs raise their drooping stems, the senses revive, the sinking produced by the fatigues of the previous day disappear as the shadows depart. But nowhere is this effect more sensibly felt than on the levels of lofty mountains; where, at an equal distance from the vapours

that moisten the plains, and the eternal snows that put a stop to all vegetation, we appear as it were to move between earth and heaven.

Cesia, notwithstanding his uneasiness, did not fail to experience the return of that feeling of gratification, that plenitude of vitality that is unknown to the natives of the low grounds, and that gives so inexpressible a charm to existence. His depressed heart revived within him; his soul expanded under the influence of the rising sun as the flower when it rears its head that has been bent under the weight of the night dews: a more smiling horizon opened on his view, and in a short time the splendid spectacle that surrounded him kindled his imagination, and in his enthusiasm he exclaimed,—"So lovely a scene as this is alone worthy of my well-beloved; 'tis here she ought

to dwell with the happy mortal that knows how to appreciate her worth. Oh! that our days might flow away sweetly and noiseless, as this limpid brook that, springing from an unknown source, glides gently on to the gulf, in whose darkness and profundity it is at last lost! Why should I disquiet myself at the thought of her happiness? Her tastes are simple and rural. Has she not repeatedly told me that noisy pleasures have no attractions for her? that she despises luxury and vain show? What then can she have to regret in abandoning what is termed the world? Doubtless, the cares that she bestows on the unfortunate must cease; but if she find in these exalted regions none that requires her charitable aid, she can descend to the valleys, where she may pass for one of those angels of the upper air, to whom she bears so

intimate a resemblance. Ah! let her but love me; let her but consent to unite her lot with mine, and I shall answer for her happiness!"

The romantic ideas, which he welcomed with transport, continued to work in the brain of the passionate lover. In vain did reason endeavour to point out the obstacles that rendered his project unattainable; it was irrevocably fixed in his mind, and his inventive spirit was thenceforth only occupied in plans for realising it.

CHAPTER XIII.

DIFFICULTIES of every kind opposed the designs of Cesia; and they were such as a temper less persevering than his would have found insurmountable. In fact, it was all but impossible to get to Thomasine, in order to ascertain her sentiments, without incurring the greatest risks; for the description of Cesia had been distributed, along with those of the other proscribed parties, among all the agents of the Austrian police; and not only had he

to escape their vigilance, but he had to penetrate to the residence of the Marquis Varèze without being perceived by any one but his daughter. For greater security he passed the frontier in company with one of those numerous bands of smugglers which regularly supply Lombardy with a number of articles, of which the imperial government has attempted, but in vain, to prevent the introduction. Of serious danger he ran but small risk; for these fellows are much more in the habit of exchanging crowns than shots with the revenue officers.

Having reached without hindrance the banks of the Lake of Como, the count passed over the water opposite to Blevio, and landing in a lonely cove at the foot of a rock that had been worn away by the incessant fretting of the waves that broke on it, he sought shelter until

nightfall in a moss-grown cave, the mouth of which was obscured by the branches of a wild fig-tree. When the hour was come to quit this retreat, he climbed the hill, gained the wood that stretches along its summit above the garden-ground, and thence by a scarce trodden footpath he descended to a little gate that communicated between the palace of Varèze and a cottage occupied by the vine-dresser of the marquis. He was aware that Thomasine had been in the habit of going to this cottage every day from the period that the wife of the old servant had been affected with a palsy, which rendered her no longer capable of watching over the education of her children, and hardly had he stationed himself there before she appeared.

The sun had gone down for nearly an hour, but the horizon still flamed with light; for not

unfrequently in that fine clime during the twilight, the golden and purple-coloured clouds that hang over the lake are so brightly reflected in the crystal of its waters, that they bestow on surrounding objects a singular, though short-lived splendour, which eclipses that of broad day. Thomasine did not at the first glance recognise the count, who stood in her path holding a paper in his hand, with which he shaded his features; but the instant that he spoke she experienced a fit of trembling so great that she tottered, and had nearly fallen. La Cesia sprung forward to support her, and begged her to calm her alarm. "Fear not," said he to her, in tones in which respect and tenderness mingled; "let nothing disturb the tranquillity that I would guarantee at the expense of my life. I wish to converse with you for a minute—this is indispensable; but

I swear to you notwithstanding, that it will entirely depend on yourself whether I shall see you in future;—all that I now ask you is to read this paper."

As he finished these words, without waiting for her answer, he abruptly quitted her presence and plunged into the thicket. Thomasine hurried across the garden with as much haste as her agitation permitted; what she had just heard had indeed excited her curiosity in the highest degree. We shall not give the words of the message. Writings of that kind have all one common resemblance; or if they differ, they differ in the form of expression only; they interest therefore those only whom they peculiarly regard. Yet however exaggerated, however extravagant such productions may seem to persons of cold temperament, they are not for the most part the less sincere, unless

we except the promises which they generally lavish; these, we confess, are generally rash or doubtful. One thing however distinguished the epistle of Cesia from all the loveletters that have come to our knowledge; instead of soliciting with ardour a speedy answer, he besought Thomasine to reflect maturely on what she read before she came to an irrevocable determination.

"Whatever be the degree of my impatience," it went on—"whatever be the dangers to which I am exposed by remaining here, I shall willingly wait one day—many days. If you consent to our union, that our happiness may be permanent I must owe nothing to precipitation, and still less to pity."

We may mark in these expressions that haughty soul, whose pride, which formed its characteristic feature, even love had not sub-

dued. As to Thomasine, absence, far from weakening the sentiments that Cesia had inspired her with, had only made her fully sensible of their force. It was to the count that all her thoughts had reference, and it was the image of the count that was ever present to her eyes. It was, therefore, with inexpressible joy she learned that she was beloved; but the delicious feeling was speedily troubled by the reflections that her situation inspired.

"He asks me if I love him," said she to herself; "alas! if I only listened to the suggestions of my own heart, the answer would be an easy one. He seeks, before endeavouring to remove those obstacles that oppose our union, to be certain of my consent! Does he not perceive that the principal obstacle lies in the will of my father, and why does he not address himself to him? Ah! it is assuredly from a

sentiment of delicacy; he wishes not that paternal authority should interpose before he is assured of my assent to his application! But how can I express it? Propriety—my duty—forbid me to see him in private, and even to write to him. Yes, I owe to him, whom Heaven in its goodness has assigned to me as my protector, the most minute account of all my actions, of all my resolutions."

This argument was conclusive, and she was convinced by it: for virtue exercises over hearts that have never gone astray the most absolute authority. Thomasine determined then to carry the count's letter forthwith to her father; but as she descended from the chamber which she occupied on the first floor, she saw through the window of the stair the candles that had lighted the apartment of the venerable old man extinguished. She feared to disturb

his repose, and she slowly returned, content to put off until the morrow a communication, the necessity of which she acknowledged, but of which she experienced by anticipation all the embarrassment. A painful recollection at that moment came across her of her departed mother. Whatever be the tenderness of a daughter, nay, whatever be the love even of a son towards a father, it is only into the bosom of a mother that children can pour with endearing confidence the secrets of the heart.

Sleep did not fail to interrupt the current of her thoughts; but her slumbers were neither long nor peaceful. Long ere day dawned she awoke with a piercing cry. She had in her dreams beheld a horrifying sight: she fancied that in a sharp altercation which La Cesia maintained with the marquis on the subject of his marriage, the latter, while repulsing his

daughter, who had sunk at his feet, made a false step and fell backward. The old man called aloud for help; and a band of Austrian soldiers, led on by an agent of police, attracted by the noise, came running forward; they seized the count, and were about to drag him to prison, when by a sudden effort he released himself from their grasp, and, preferring death to imprisonment, plunged headlong into the lake.

It was a long time before Thomasine, who was so dreadfully terrified, that she could hardly breathe, recovered from the agitation into which this fatal vision had thrown her. It was not, indeed, until she had passed an hour in prayer at the foot of the Virgin, whom she especially honoured, that her mind became sufficiently calm to reflect on her situation.

What she had beheld in her dreams was,

indeed, but the idle illusion of a heated imagination; but truth, as is generally the case, had furnished the groundwork.

In fact, it was but too probable that, in existing circumstances, the marquis would refuse the consent required, and the violent character of the count was sufficient to excite the most lively alarms. "How will he be able," thought Thomasine, "to support the rigour of my silence, and the indignity of a refusal so signified? Hitherto a degree of prudence and of reserve, not at all to be expected from him, has regulated his conduct; but if his request be refused, his violence will break through all restraints. Alas! it is too true, every hope of happiness for me is lost for ever! But," continued she, weeping bitterly, "while I am occupied in anticipated sorrows, an imminent danger hangs over us. If he obstinately determines to re-

main in this neighbourhood, in a country filled with spies and traitors, he will be unquestionably discovered, and given over to his pitiless enemies. The soldiers—the lake—the whole is a salutary warning sent by Heaven. I must profit by its goodness."

A rigid moralist would doubtless have easily refuted these reasonings, which were specious rather than solid; but they did not appear the less conclusive in the eyes of a young and honourable, but inexperienced female, who thought she could without any breach of duty, nay, who thought it an act paramount to all others to save an unhappy and beloved object in momentary danger of perishing. Reared by a pious and charitable mother, and accustomed from her infancy to compassionate misfortune, to solace misery, it may be easily supposed that she confounded with the promptings of huma-

nity the secret love that she felt in the bottom of her heart. Whatever should be the consequence, she determined that her father should not see the letter of La Cesia, at least until she had despatched a billet to the latter, imploring him to remove from a spot where his personal safety was exposed to so great a risk. She thought that she ought at the same time to inform him, that the marquis had an invincible repugnance to bestow his daughter's hand on a proscribed man; and that it was worse than useless to ask it of him so long as the existing state of things remained; and that was too violent to last long. Of her own personal feelings Thomasine firmly resolved to breathe not a syllable: if the count's sagacity enabled him to divine them, she was not to blame. The only thing that remained was to find a messenger to carry her letter. After a little consideration, she deter-

mined to intrust it to the eldest daughter of the vine-dresser, and with this intention she went at an earlier hour than usual to the cottage; but on her arrival there, she learned, to her great chagrin as well as surprise, that the child was not in a condition to execute her commission. In the morning the measles, that were raging throughout the district, had indicated their presence by a smart attack of fever; and the sorrowing mother, who was confined to her bed, was impatiently looking for her benefactress, in whom all her hopes were placed: nor were they placed in vain. Thomasine, neglecting her dearest inclinations, thought of nothing but succouring the little patient; she hastily despatched a messenger to Como for the physician, while she prepared a suitable potion for the child; nor was it until the

physician had arrived, and had declared that there was no danger, that she thought of returning to the palace of her father. The hour appointed for her meeting with the count was long passed, yet it was possible he might have waited with a view to see her. Pondering on this possibility, she with a tottering step advanced towards the garden gate, and finding no one there, she opened and shut it again with a lingering hand; but scarcely had she got within the enclosure when, at the turn of the first alley, she beheld in the clear moonlight the shadow of a man of lofty stature projected on the gravel. Not doubting that this was La Cesia, she went up to him, and held out the billet that she had written.

"Heaven is my witness," said she, "that I had no intention of meeting you. Take my

answer, and for Heaven's sake withdraw from a place where you are no longer in safety."

"Since you have consented to write to me," replied he, taking eagerly the paper thus presented to him, "you will surely deign to listen to me for a few moments."

"No, I cannot—I am entirely dependent on my father's will; he alone can dispose of me."

In pronouncing these words, she made a motion to withdraw; but the count sprung suddenly before her, and barred the way of her retreat. "You speak to me of your father," said he, with an eagerness into which some feeling of anger entered; "you wish me to address myself to him, as if the business between you and me were a matter of sordid interest. Listen to me, Thomasine," he vehemently continued, perceiving that she still sought to

escape; "I seek not to turn you away from the obedience you owe to the author of your days, but think that the feebleness of his character may lead him to commit irreparable errors in disposing of your hand, and that of these errors you will be the first victim. His health is visibly declining; he requires not only your touching cares, your beloved presence, he requires, besides, a supporting friend, especially in the present difficult circumstances in which the country is placed. You assure his peace by consenting to unite your destinies with mine. Never, never, believe me, did a son show more affectionate, more devoted attention to a father, than I am prepared to offer to yours."

These last expressions soothed Thomasine as much as the commencement of the conversation had alarmed her. "How well you divine my

feelings!" said she to him with much emotion. "Yes, my most ardent wishes are for my father's happiness; and there is no sacrifice I would not make in order to ensure so desirable an end. You tell me you are desirous to assist me in its attainment; follow that generous determination, and endeavour immediately to free yourself from the dangerous position in which the late troubles have placed you. It is most unjust that courage so brilliant and talents so distinguished should be lost to the world and to us. My father does justice to your merits; he loves your person; if he prefer your suit, it will not be from me," added she, blushing deeply, "that you will meet any opposition to his will."

"Adorable girl!" cried the count, throwing himself at her feet; "angel of virtue and of filial

affection, would you then have me submit to the humiliation of appealing to the mercy of the tyrants of my country for pardon of an offence which was but the act of a bold and free man, and which success would have amply justified? Yes, though no terror of punishment could ever prevail on me, nor any horrors of captivity, even the most dreadful, one word from your lips, one flattering hope will be sufficient to determine me to that course: love has vanquished this heart of iron.—Behold me at your disposal, a submissive slave, if such be your will! Henceforth I shall bite my chain in silence." He trembled with indignation while he spoke these words; but soon assuming a calmer tone, he added, "Since I must remove myself from you, and perhaps for a long time, what will support my courage under so

painful a trial?—What pledge will you give me of a sentiment that is the glory of my existence, and the only tie that binds me to it?"

A momentary silence ensued on both sides; it was broken by Thomasine, exclaiming with a firmness of tone that resembled inspiration—

"La Cesia, follow me!"

As she thus spoke, she descended with hasty steps a pathway leading to a pavilion, whose exterior was painted in various colours, and served as a decoration to that part of the garden; there, pushing open a door that was half concealed by the foliage, she led the wondering count into one of those ossuaries that are not uncommon in the north of Lombardy and in Switzerland; receptacles where the piety of a semi-civilised people has of old time consecrated to religion the remains of their

ancestors, by arranging them in symmetrical masses. At the bottom of this vault there was a Madonna, surrounded by a framework strangely composed of these mournful fragments. Every thing was calm and silent in this abode of death; the reflection of the moon which danced on the lake alone seemed to bestow a flickering motion on these blanched and dried remains. Familiarised from her infancy to the sombre scene, Thomasine was in the frequent habit of visiting this solitary oratory to pour out her evening prayers. On entering it on the present occasion, she stretched out her hand, and resting it on the altar, said in a solemn tone—

"La Cesia, let what will happen, I call Heaven and these mute evidences to witness, I shall never be any but yours."

"And I," cried La Cesia, in a transport of pleasure that rose to ecstasy, "receive thy faith, and solemnly pledge my own to thee."

It is probable that in pronouncing these words, in the heat of the moment, he struck the base of one of those tottering pyramids that had been reared on each side of the altar, for it crumbled down with a loud crash; and one of the sculls that had composed it rolled forward to the feet of the two lovers. Cesia was struck with horror at the omen, and involuntarily put his hand on his pistols, while Thomasine could not repress a shriek; but her cry was the result of the surprise only, the accident had not affected her farther. When the count therefore began to soothe her, she calmly answered his endeavours by observing, that the dead alarmed her not. "I fear," said she, the

serenity and peacefulness of an innocent heart beaming from her gentle eyes, "the living God, and none but him." The impression of terror that the count had received left deeper traces. That heart, so intrepid in battle, was not equally resolved against the forebodings of superstition; a weakness against which, by a singular inconsequence, the incredulity of those who believe themselves bold, because they are presumptuous, does not always protect them. Despite of the suggestions of his reason, the sinistrous augury troubled his present enjoyment, and rose before his mental vision like a dark and threatening cloud on the horizon of his future bliss. But Thomasine now felt the necessity of rejoining her father. At the moment of quitting La Cesia she held forth to him her hand, which he pressed to his heart; nor did

she make any great effort to withdraw it. He slowly and pensively turned to the boat that was to bear him from her; but had not proceeded but a step or two, when he sprang back again, his eye sparkling and his countenance on fire, as if some violent and irresistible impulse had taken sudden and entire possession of him.

"Thomasine," he cried aloud, "if I quit you now, I shall lose you for ever; I feel but too sadly assured of this. What wait we for? you love me, your innocent candour has just now made the avowal, what more is required to render us happy? Follow me—your lover, your husband!" He pressed her in his arms as he spoke, and began to draw her towards the boat. But there is a moral power in virtue to which physical force must always yield; nor is virtue ever disarmed until it becomes a traitor to itself. The daughter of the marquis hastily broke from the arms that were twined around her, and regarding the count with one of those almost superhuman looks of dignity that com-

mand instantaneous respect, she said—"Unhappy man, whence this frenzy? and what would thou do with her that thou lovest, were she weak enough to forget her duty and to follow thy counsels?"

These few words, but much more the air that accompanied them, produced an instantaneous effect on the count; he was silent and troubled: but though he felt the reasonableness of the appeal, his dark, yet ardent look still retained its expression of passion and despair. As he again withdrew she lifted up her hands, and eyes now filled with tears, to heaven, and said to him—"Cesia, let us hope for better days; but above all things, let us strive to deserve them."

He answered not; but casting himself into the boat, he pushed from the land, while Thomasine retired to the palace. She turned not to look on the bark of the count; but every beat of his receding oars smote deeply and mournfully on her saddened heart.

END OF VOL. I.

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